

Arch-Bishop
TILLOTSON'S
Fourth Volume.



R. White sculp.

The most Reverend
DR. JOHN TILLOTSON
late Arch Bishop of Canterbury.

Several Discourses,

Viz.

Of the great Duties of Natural Religion.

Instituted Religion not intended to undermine
Natural.

Christianity not destructive; but perfective of
the Law of *Moses*.

The Nature and Necessity of Regeneration.

The Danger of all known Sin.

Knowledge and Practice necessary in Religion.

The Sins of Men not Chargeable on God.

By the most Reverend
Dr. JOHN TILLOTSON,
Late Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*.

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SERMON I.

Of the great Duties of Natural Religion, with the Ways and Means of knowing them.

MICAH. 6. 6, 7, 8.

*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord,
and bow my self before the high God ?
shall I come before him with burnt offer-
ings, with Calves of a year old ?*

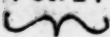
*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of
Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers
of Oyl ? shall I give my first born for my
transgression, the fruit of my body for
the sin of my soul ?*

*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ;
and what doth the Lord require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy, and
to walk humbly with thy God ?*

IN the beginning of this Chapter,
the Prophet tells the People of Is-
rael, that the Lord had a Controver-
sie with them ; and that he might direct

B them

2 *The great Duties of Natural Religion,*

Vol. IV.  them how to take up this quarrel, he brings in one making this enquiry in the name of the People; *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God?* That is, by what kind of Worship or Devotion may I address my self to him in the most acceptable manner? by what means may I hope to appease his displeasure? To satisfie this enquiry, he first instanceth in the chief kinds of Sacrifices and Expiations that were in use among the *Jews* and *Heathens*; *Shall I come before him with burnt offerings?* the constant Sacrifice that was offered to God by way of acknowledgment of his Dominion over the Creatures; *with Calves of a year old?* which was the Sin-offering which the High-Priest offered for himself. Or Will he rather accept of those great and costly Sacrifices which were offered upon Solemn and Publick Occasions, such as that was which *Solomon* offered at the Dedication of the Temple? *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl?* Or if none of these will do, shall I try to atone him after the manner of the *Heathen*, by the dearest thing in the World,

World, the first-born of my Children? *Serm. I.*
Shall I give my first-born for my trans-
gression, the fruit of my Body for the
sin of my soul? If God was to be ap-
peased at all, surely they thought it
must be by some of these ways, for be-
yond these they could imagine nothing
of greater value and efficacy.

But the Prophet tells them that they
were quite out of the way, in think-
ing to pacifie God upon these terms,
that there are other things which are
much better and more pleasing to him
than any of these Sacrifices. For some
of them were expressly forbidden by
God, as *the offering up of our Children*;
and for the rest, they were not good
in themselves, but meerly by vertue of
their Institution, and because they
were commanded. But the things
which he would recommend to them,
are such as are good in their own na-
ture, and required of us by God upon
that account. *He hath shewed thee, O*
Man, what is good, and what doth the
Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and
to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy
God?



So that in these words you have,

First, An Enquiry which is the best way to appease God when he is offended; *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God?*

Secondly, The way that Men are apt to take in this Case; and that is by some external piece of Religion and Devotion; such as Sacrifice was both among Jews and Heathen. *Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings, &c.* By which questions the Prophet intimates that Men are very apt to pitch upon this course.

Thirdly, The course which God himself directs to, and which will effectually pacifie him. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, &c.*

The *First* being a meer question, there needs no more to be said of it; only that it is a question of great importance; What is the most effectual way

with the Means of knowing them.

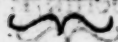
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way to appease God when we have offended him? For who can bear his indignation, and who can stand before him, when once he is angry? Let us consider then, in the

Serm. I.

Second place, the way that Men are apt to take to pacifie God ; and that is by some external piece of Religion and Devotion, such as were Sacrifices among the Jews and Heathen. Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings? This is the way which Men are most apt to chuse. The Jews, you see, pitched upon the external parts of their Religion, those which were most pompous and solemn, the richest and most costly Sacrifices ; so they might but keep their Sins, they were well enough content to offer up any thing else to God ; they thought nothing too good for him, provided he would not oblige them to become better.

And thus it is among our selves, when we apprehend God is displeased with us, and his Judgments abroad in the Earth, we are content to do any thing, but *to learn righteousness*; we are



willing to submit to any kind of external Devotion and Humiliation, to Fast, and Pray, to afflict our selves, and to cry mightily unto God; things some of them good in themselves, but the least part of that which God requires of us.


And as for the Church of *Rome*, in case of publick Judgments and Calamities, they are the inquisitive and (as they pretend) the most skilful People in the world to pacifie God, and they have a thousand solemn devices to this purpose. I do not wrong them, by representing them enquiring after this manner. "Shall I go before
 "a *Crucifix*, and bow my self to it, as
 "to the high God? And, because the
 "Lord is a great King, and it is per-
 "haps too much boldness and arro-
 "gancy to make immediate Addresses
 "always to him; to which of the
 "Saints or Angels shall I go to mediate
 "for me, and intercede on my behalf?
 "Will the Lord be pleased with thou-
 "sands of *Pater-Nosters*, or with ten
 "thousands of *Ave-Marys*? Shall the
 "*Host* travel in procession, or my self
 "undertake a tedious *Pilgrimage*? Or
 shall

with the Means of knowing them.

7

“shall I lift my self a Souldier for *Serm. I.*
“*the Holy War*, or for *the Extirpation*
“*of Hereticks*? Shall I give half my
“Estate to a *Convent* for my Trans-
“gression, or chastise and punish my Bo-
“dy for the Sin of my Soul? Thus Men
deceive themselves, and will submit to
all the extravagant Severities, that the
Petulancy and Folly of Men can de-
vise and impose upon them. And in-
deed it is not to be imagined, when
Men are once under the Power of
Superstition, how ridiculous they may
be, and yet think themselves religi-
ous; how prodigiously they may play
the Fool, and yet believe they please
God; what cruel and barbarous things
they may do to themselves and others,
and yet be *verily perswaded they do God*
good Service.

And what is the Mystery of all this,
but that Men are loath to do that
without which, nothing else that we
do is acceptable to God? They *bate*
to be reformed; and for this Reason,
they will be content to do any Thing,
rather than be put to the Trouble of
Mending themselves; every thing is

Vol. IV.  easie in comparison of this Task, and God may have any Terms of them, so he will let them be quiet in their Sins, and excuse them from the real Virtues of a good Life. And this brings me to the

Third Thing, which I principally intended to speak to. The Course which God himself directs to, and which will effectually pacifie him. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* In the handling of which, I shall,

First, Consider those several Duties which God here requires of us, and upon the Performance of which he will be pacified towards us.

Secondly, By what Ways and Means God hath discovered these Duties to us, and the Goodness of them; *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, &c.*

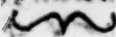
I. We will briefly consider the several Duties which God here requires
of

of us, and upon the Performance of *Serm. I.*
which he will be pacified towards us ;
*What doth the Lord require of thee ; but
to do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to
walk humbly with thy God ?*

It was usual among the Jews to reduce all the Duties of Religion to these three Heads, *Justice, Mercy, and Piety* ; under the first two, comprehending the Duties which we owe to one another, and under the third the Duties which we owe to God.

I. Justice. And I was going to tell you what it is, but I considered that every Man knows it, as well as any Definition can explain it to him. I shall only put you in mind of some of the principal Instances of it, and the several Virtues comprehended under it. And,

First, Justice is concerned in the making of Laws ; that they be such as are equal and reasonable, useful and beneficial, for the Honour of God and Religion, and for the publick good of Human Society ; This is a great

Vol. IV.  great Trust, in the discharge of which, if Men be byassed by Favour or Interest, and drawn aside from the Consideration and Regard of the publick Good, it is a far greater Crime, and of worse Consequence, than any private Act of Injustice between Man and Man.

And then, Justice is also concerned in the due Execution of Laws; which are the Guard of private Property, the Security of Publick Peace, and of Religion and Good Manners. And,

Lastly, In the Observance of Laws, and Obedience to them; which is a Debt that every Man owes to Humane Society.

But more especially Justice is concerned in the Observance of those Laws, whether of God or Man, which respect the Rights of Men, and their mutual Commerce and Intercourse with one another. That we use Honesty and Integrity in all our Dealings, in Opposition to Fraud and Deceit;

ceit; Truth and Fidelity, in Opposition to Falshood and Breach of Trust; Equity and good Conscience, in Opposition to all kind of Oppression and Exaction. These are the principal Branches, and Instances of this great and comprehensive Duty of Justice; the Violation whereof is so much the greater Sin, because this Virtue is the firmest Bond of Humane Society, upon the Observation whereof, the Peace and Happiness of Mankind does so much depend.

2. *Mercy*, which does not only signify the inward Affection of Pity and Compassion towards those that are in Misery and Necessity, but the Effects of it, in the Actual Relief of those whose Condition calls for our Charitable Help and Assistance; By feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked, and visiting the Sick, and vindicating the Oppressed, and comforting the afflicted, and ministring Ease and Relief to them if it be in our Power. And this is a very lovely Virtue, and argues more Goodness in Men than mere *Justice* doth. For *Justice*

is

Vol. IV. is a strict Debt; but *Mercy* is Favour and Kindness. And this perhaps may be the reason of the different Expressions in the Text, that when God barely commands us *to do justly*, he requires we should *love Mercy*, that is, take a particular Pleasure and Delight in the Exercise of this Virtue, which is so proper and agreeable to Mankind, that we commonly call it *Humanity*, giving it its Name from our very Nature. In short, it is so excellent a Virtue, that I should be very sorry that any Religion should be able to pretend to the Practice of it more than our own.

3. *Piety; To walk humbly with thy God. To walk humbly in the fear of the Lord;* so the *Chaldee* Paraphrase renders these Words. And this Phrase may comprehend all those Acts of Religion which refer immediately to God; A firm Belief of his Being and Perfections; an awful Sense of him, as the dread Sovereign and righteous Judge of the World; a due Regard to his Service, and a reverent behaviour of our selves towards him in all Acts

Acts of Worship and Religion, in Sermon. I.
Opposition to Atheism and a Prophane
Neglect and Contempt of God and
Religion; a new and monstrous kind
of Impiety! which of late Years
hath broke in upon us, and got head
among us, not only contrary to the
Example of former Ages, but in De-
spight of the very Genius and Tem-
per of the Nation, which is naturally
devout and zealous in Religion.

Or else this Phrase of *walking hum-
bly with God*, may refer more parti-
cularly to the Posture and Condition
of the People of *Israel* at that time,
who were fallen under the heavy Dis-
pleasure of God for their Sins. And
then the Duty required is, that being
sensible how highly God hath been
offended by us, by the general Cor-
ruption and Viciousness of the Age,
which like a Leprosie hath spread it
self almost over the whole Body of
the Nation, and by that open Lewd-
ness and those insolent Impieties which
are daily committed amongst us; I say,
that being deeply sensible of this, we
do with all Humility acknowledge our
Sins

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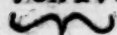
* This Ser-
mon was
Preach'd
upon occa-
sion of a
public Fast.

Sins to God, and repent of them, and implore his Mercy and Forgiveness, and resolve by his grace to turn every one from the evil of our ways, and from the wickedness that is in our hands; which God grant we may every one do * this Day, according to the pious design and intention of it. And if we be sincere in this Resolution, who can tell but God may turn and repent, and turn away his anger from us, that we perish not. Nay, we have great reason to believe, that he will be pacified towards us. So he hath declared, *Isa. I. 16.* Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll. But if we continue unreformed, God will say to us, as he does there to the people of Israel, *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? your calling of Assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting:*

meeting; and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. To which, let me add that excellent Saying of the Son of Syrach to this purpose Ecclesiastic. 34. 25, 26. *He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing? So is it with a Man that fasteth for his Sins, and goeth again and doth the same things. Who will hear his Prayer, or what doth his Humbling profit him?*

II. Let us consider by what ways and means God hath made known these Duties to us, and the goodness and the obligation of them. *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee?* I shall mention Five ways whereby God hath discovered this to us.

1. By a kind of natural Instinct.
2. By natural Reason.
3. By the general vote and consent of Mankind.
4. By



4. By external Revelation.

5. By the inward Dictates and Motions of God's Spirit upon the Minds of Men.

First, By a kind of natural Instinct, by which I mean a secret Impression upon the Minds of Men, whereby they are naturally carried to approve some things as good and fit, and to dislike other things, as having a native evil and deformity in them. And this I call a *natural Instinct*, because it does not seem to proceed so much from the exercise of our Reason, as from a natural propension and inclination, like those Instincts which are in Brute Creatures, of natural affection and care towards their young ones. And that these Inclinations are precedent to all reason and discourse about them, evidently appears by this, that they do put forth themselves every whit as vigorously in young persons, as in those of riper Reason; in the rude and ignorant sort of People, as in those who are more polish'd and refin'd. For we

we see plainly that the young and ignorant have as strong impressions of Piety and Devotion, as true a sense of gratitude and justice and pity, as the wiser and more knowing part of Mankind. A plain indication, that the Reason of Mankind is prevented by a kind of *natural instinct* and *anticipation* concerning the good or evil, the comeliness or deformity of these things. And though this do not equally extend to all the instances of our Duty, yet as to the great lines and essential parts of it, Mankind hardly need to consult any other Oracle, than the meer propensions and inclinations of their Nature; as, whether we ought to reverence the Divine Nature, to be grateful to those who have conferred benefits upon us, to speak the truth, to be faithful to our promise, to restore that which is committed to us in trust, to pity and relieve those that are in misery, and in all things to do to others as we would have them do to us. And this will further appear, if we consider these two things.

C

I. That

The great Duties of Natural Religion,

1. That Men are naturally innocent or guilty to themselves, according to what they do in these things. So the Apostle tells us, *Rom. 2. 14, 15. When the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves, and do shew the effect of the Law written in their hearts, their Consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts by turns (that is, according as they do well or ill) accusing or excusing them.* There is a secret comfort in innocence, and a strange pleasure and satisfaction in being acquitted by our own Minds for what we do. But on the contrary, when we contradict these natural Dictates, what uneasiness do we find in our own Breasts? Nay even before the Fact is committed, our Conscience is strangely disquieted at the thoughts of it. When a Man does but design to do a bad thing, he is guilty to himself, as if he had committed it. Of this we have a considerable instance, in the first violence that was offered to Nature, *Gen. 4. 6. The Lord said unto Cain, why art thou wroth, and why*

Why is thy countenance fallen? The very thought of that Wickedness which he did but then design, did disorder his Mind, and make a change in his very Countenance. Guilt is the natural Concomitant of heinous Crimes, which so soon as ever a Man commits, his Spirit receives a secret wound, which causeth a great deal of smart and anguish. For guilt is restless, and puts the Mind of Man into an unnatural working and fermentation, never to be settled again but by Repentance. *The Wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest*; which plainly shews that the Mind of Man hath a kind of Natural sense of Good and Evil; because when ever we offend against Nature, our Consciences are touched to the quick, and we receive a sting into our Soul, which shoots and pains us, when ever we reflect upon what we have done. I appeal to that witness which every Man carries in his breast, whether this be not true.

2. Men are naturally full of hopes and fears, according as they follow or go against these natural Dictates. A

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good Conscience is apt to fill Men with confidence and good hopes. It does not only give ease; but security to the Mind of Man, against the dread of Invisible Powers, and the fearful apprehensions of a future Judgment. Whereas guilt fills Men with dismal apprehensions of danger, and continual misgivings concerning their own safety. Thus it was with *Cain* after he had slain his Brother; *It shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me.* Nay, when a Man hath done a secret fault, which none can accuse him of, yet then is he haunted with the terrors of his own Mind, and cannot be secure in his own apprehensions; which plainly shews that Men are conscious to themselves, when they do well, and when they do amiss; and that the same *Natural Instinct* which prompts Men to their Duty, fills them with good hopes when they have done it, and with secret fears and apprehensions of danger when they have done contrary to it.

Secondly, God shews Men what is good, by Natural Reason; and that

two ways; By the convenience of things to our Nature; and by their tendency to our Happiness and Interest.

Serm. 7

First, Reason shews us the convenience of things to our Nature; and whatever is agreeable to the Primitive design and intention of Nature, that we call *good*; whatever is contrary thereto, we call *evil*. For Example, *to honour and love God*. It is natural to honour great power and perfection, and to love goodness wherever it is. So likewise, *gratitude* is natural, to acknowledge benefits received, and to be ready to requite them, and the contrary is monstrous, and universally abhorred; and there is no greater sign that any thing is contrary to Nature, than if it be detested by the whole kind. It is agreeable also to Nature to be *just*, and *to do to others, as we would have them do to us*; for this is to make our own natural inclinations and desires, the rule of our dealing with others; and *to be merciful*; for no Man that hath not divested himself of humanity, can be cruel and hard-hearted to others, without feeling a pain in himself.



Secondly, Reason shews us the Tendency of these Things to our Happiness and Interest. And indeed the notion of *good* and *evil* does commonly refer to the Consequences of things; and we call that *good*, which will bring some Benefit and Advantage to us, and that *evil* which is likely to produce some Mischief and Inconvenience; and by this rule Reason discovers to us that these Duties are *good*.

To begin with *Piety* towards God. Nothing can more evidently tend to our Interest, than to make him our Friend, upon whose Favour our Happiness depends. So likewise for *Gratitude*; it is a Virtue, to which if Nature did not prompt us, our Interest would direct us; for every Man is ready to place Benefits there where he may hope for a thankful Return. *Temperance* does apparently conduce to our Health, which, next to a good Conscience, is the most pleasant and valuable thing in the World; whereas the intemperate Man is an open Enemy

Enemy to himself, and continually making Assaults upon his own Life. *Mer-*

cy and *Pity* are not more welcome to others, than they are delightful and beneficial to our selves; for we do not only gratifie our own Nature and Bowels, by relieving those who are in misery, but we provoke Mankind by our Example to the like Tenderness, and do prudently bespeak the Commiseration of others towards us, when it shall be our Turn to stand in need of it. And if we be wise enough, our Reason will likewise direct us to be *just*, as the surest Art of thriving in this World; It gives a Man a Reputation, which is a powerful Advantage in all the Affairs of this World; It is the shortest and easiest way of dispatching Business, the plainest, and least entangled; and though it be not so *sudden* a way of growing rich, as Fraud and Oppression: yet it is much *surer* and more *lasting*, and not liable to those terrible Back-blows and after-reckonings, to which Estates got by Injustice are.



And natural Reason does not only shew us that these things are good, but that *the Lord requires them of us*, that is, that they have the Force and Obligation of *Laws*. For there needs nothing more to make any thing a *Law*, than a sufficient declaration, that it is *the Will of God*; and this God hath sufficiently signified to Mankind by the very Frame of our Natures, and of those principles and faculties which he hath endued us withall; so that whenever we act contrary to these, we plainly disobey the Will of him that made us, and violate those *Laws* which he hath Enacted in our Natures, and written upon our Hearts.

And this is all the *Law* that the greatest part of Mankind were under, before the Revelation of the Gospel. From *Adam* to *Moses*, the World was almost solely governed by the *Natural Law*; which seems to be the meaning of that hard Text, *Rom. 5. 13. For until the Law Sin was in the World*, that is, before the *Law* of *Moses* was given, Men were capable of offending

ing against some other Law, for otherwise Sin could not have been imputed to them, for *Sin is not imputed where there is no Law.* And then it follows; *Nevertheless Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's Transgression;* that is, during that space from Adam to Moses Men sinned against the natural Law, and were liable to Death upon that account, though they had not offended against an express Revelation from God, as Adam had done; for that the Apostle seems to mean, by *sinning after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression.*

Thirdly, God hath shewn us what is good by the general Vote and Consent of Mankind. Not that all Mankind do agree concerning Virtue and Vice; but that as to the greater Duties of *Piety, Justice, Mercy,* and the like, the Exceptions are but few in comparison, and not enough to infringe a general Consent. And of this I shall offer to you this threefold Evidence.

I. That

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1. That these Virtues are generally praised and held in esteem by Mankind, and the contrary Vices generally reprov'd and evil spoken of. Now to praise any thing, is to give Testimony to the Goodness of it, and to censure any thing, is to declare that we believe it to be evil. And if we consult the History of all Ages, we shall find that the things which are generally praised in the Lives of Men, and recommended to the Imitation of Posterity are Piety and Devotion, Gratitude and Justice, Humanity and Charity; and that the contrary to these are marked with Ignominy and Reproach; the former are commended even in Enemies, and the latter are branded even by those who had a kindness for the Persons that were guilty of them. So constant hath Mankind always been in the Commendation of Virtue, and in the Censure of Vice. Nay we find not only those who are virtuous themselves, giving their Testimony and Applause to Virtue, but even those who are vicious; not out of love to Goodness, but

but from the Conviction of their own Minds, and from a secret Reverence they bear to the common Consent and Opinion of Mankind. And this is a great Testimony, because it is the Testimony of an Enemy extorted by the meer light and force of Truth.

And on the contrary ; Nothing is more ordinary than for *Vice to reprove Sin*, and to hear Men condemn the like, or the same things in others, which they allow in themselves. And this is a clear Evidence, that Vice is generally condemned by Mankind, that many Men condemn it in themselves; and those who are so kind as to spare themselves, are very quick-sighted to spie a Fault in any body else, and will censure a bad Action done by another, with as much Freedom and Impartiality, as the most virtuous Man in the World.

And to this consent of Mankind about Virtue and Vice, the Scripture frequently appeals. As when it commands us *to provide things honest in the sight of all Men; and by well-doing to*
put

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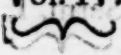
put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men ; intimating that there are some things so confessedly good, and owned to be such by so general a Vote of Mankind, that the worst of Men have not the Face to open their Mouths against them. And it is made the Character of a virtuous Action, if it be lovely, and commendable, and of good report. Philip. 4. 8. Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any praise, make account of these things ; intimating to us, that Mankind do generally concur in the Praise and Commendation of what is virtuous.

2. Men do generally glory and stand upon their Innocency, when they do virtuously ; but are ashamed, and out of Countenance, when they do the contrary. Now Glory and Shame are nothing else but an Appeal to the Judgment of others concerning the good or evil of our Actions. There are indeed some such Monsters as are impudent in their Impieties, but these are but few in comparison. Generally Mankind is modest, the greatest part

part of those who do evil are apt to blush at their own Faults, and to confess them in their Countenance, which is an Acknowledgment that they are not only guilty to themselves that they have done amiss, but that they are apprehensive that others think so For Guilt is a Passion respecting our selves, but Shame regards others. Now it is sign of Shame, that Men love to conceal their Faults from others, and commit them secretly, in the dark and without Witnesses, and are afraid even of a Child or a Fool: Or if they be discovered in them, they are solicitous to excuse and extenuate them, and ready to lay the fault upon any body else, or to transfer their Guilt, or as much of it as they can, upon others. All which are certain Tokens, that Men are not only naturally guilty to themselves, when they commit a Fault; but that they are sensible also what Opinions others have of these things.

And on the contrary, Men are apt to stand upon their Justification, and to glory when they have done well. The Conscience of a Man's own Virtue
and

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 and Integrity, lifts up his Head and gives him Confidence before others, because he is satisfied they have a good Opinion of his Actions. What a good Face does a Man naturally set upon a good Deed? And how does he sneak, when he hath done wickedly, being sensible that he is condemned by others, as well as by himself? No Man is afraid of being upbraided for having dealt honestly or kindly with others, nor does account it any Calumny or Reproach, to have it reported of him, that he is a sober and chaste Man. No Man blusheth, when he meets a Man with whom he hath kept his Word, and discharged his Trust: but every Man is apt to do so, when he meets one with whom he has dealt dishonestly, or who knows some notorious Crime by him.

3. Vice is generally forbidden and punished by Humane Laws: but against the contrary Virtues there never was any Law. Some Vices are so manifestly evil in themselves, or so mischievous to Humane Society, that the Laws of most Nations have taken care

care to discountenance them by severe Penalties. Scarce any Nation was ever so barbarous, as not to maintain and vindicate the Honour of their Gods and Religion by publick Laws. Murder and Adultery, Rebellion and Sedition, Perjury and breach of Trust, Fraud and Oppression, are Vices severely prohibited by the Laws of most Nations. A clear Indication, what Opinion the generality of Mankind, and the Wisdom of Nations have always had of these things.

But now against the contrary Virtues there never was any Law. No Man was ever impeached for *living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*. A plain Acknowledgment, that Mankind always thought them good, and never were sensible of the Inconvenience of them; for had they been so, they would have provided against them by Laws. This St. Paul takes notice of as a great Commendation of the Christian Virtues; *The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Kindness, Fidelity, Meekness, Temperance; against*
such

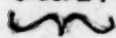
Vol. IV. *such there is no Law*; the greatest Evidence that could be given, that these things are unquestionably good in the Esteem of Mankind, *against such there is no Law*. As if he had said, turn over the Law of *Moses*, search those of *Athens*, and *Sparta*, and the *twelve Tables* of the *Romans*, and those innumerable Laws that have been added since; and you shall not in any of them find any of those Virtues that I have mentioned, condemned and forbidden. A clear Evidence that Mankind never took any exception against them, but are generally agreed about the Goodness of them.

Fourthly, God hath shewn us what is good by External Revelation. In former Ages of the World, God revealed his will to particular Persons in an extraordinary manner, and more especially to the Nation of the *Jews*, the rest of the World being in a great measure left to the conduct of natural Light. But in these later Ages he hath made a publick Revelation of his Will by his Son. And this as to the matter of our Duty, is the same in Substance

stance with the Law of Nature; For our Saviour comprehends all under these two general Heads, *the love of God, and of our Neighbour.* The Apostle reduceth all to three, *Sobriety, Justice, and Piety; The grace of God that brings Salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* So that if we believe the Apostle, the Gospel teacheth us the very same things which Nature dictated to Men before; only it hath made a more perfect discovery of them. So that whatever was doubtful and obscure before, is now certain and plain; the Duties are still the same, only it offers us more powerful Arguments, and a greater Assistance to the performance of those Duties; so that we may now much better say, than the Prophet could in his days, *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what it is that the Lord requires of thee.*

Fifthly, and lastly, God shews us what is good by the motions of his
D Spirit

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 Spirit upon the Minds of Men. This the Scripture assures us of, and good Men have experience more especially of it; though it be hard to give an account of it, and to say what motions are from the Spirit of God, and what from our own Minds; for, *as the wind blows where it listeth, and we hear the sound of it, but know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes;* so are the Operations of the Spirit of God upon the Minds of Men, secret and imperceptible.

And thus I have done with the *three* things I propounded to speak to. All that now remains, is to make some *Inferences* from what hath been said, by way of Application.

First, Seeing God hath so abundantly provided that we should know our Duty, we are altogether inexcusable, if we do not do it. Because *he hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of thee;* therefore *thou art inexcusable, O Man, whatsoever thou art,* who livest in a contradiction to this light. God hath acquainted

acquainted us with our Duty, by Sermon. I.
such ways as may most effectually both
direct and engage us to the practice
of it; we are prompted to it by a kind
of natural Instinct, and strong impres-
sions upon our Minds of the difference
of good and evil; we are led to the
knowledge, and urged to the practice
of it, by our Nature, and by our Rea-
son, and by our Interest, and by that
which is commonly very prevalent a-
mong Men, the general voice and
consent of Mankind; and by the most
powerful and governing passions in
Humane Nature, by hope and by
fear, and by shame; by the prospect
of advantage, by the apprehension of
danger, and by the sense of honour;
and to take away all possible excuse of
ignorance from us, by an express Re-
velation from God, the clearest and
most perfect that ever was made to
the World. So that when ever we do
contrary to our Duty, in any of these
great Instances, we offend against all
these, and do in the highest degree
fall under the heavy Sentence of our
Saviour, *This is the Condemnation, that*
D 2 *light*

Vol. IV. *light is come into the World, and men loved darkness rather than light.*

Secondly, You see hence what are the great Duties of Religion, which God mainly requires of us, and how reasonable they are; *Piety* towards God, and *Justice* and *Charity* towards Men; the knowledge whereof is planted in our Nature, and grows up with our Reason. And these are things which are unquestionably good, and against which we can have no exception; things that were never reprov'd, nor found fault with by Mankind, neither our Nature nor our Reason riseth up against them, or dictates any thing to the contrary. We have all the Obligation, and we have all the Encouragement to them, and are secure on all hands in the practice of them. In the doing of these things, there is no danger to us from the Laws of Men, no fear of displeasure from God, no offence or sting from our own Minds.

And these things which are so agreeable to our Nature, and our Reason, and
our

our Interest, are the great things which our Religion requires of us, more valuable in themselves, and more acceptable to God than *whole Burnt offerings and Sacrifices*, more than *thousands of Rams*, and *ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl*; more than if we offered to him *all the Beasts of the Forest*, and *the Cattle upon a thousand Hills*. We are not to neglect any Institution of God; but above all, we are to secure the observance of those great Duties to which we are directed by our very Nature, and tyed by the surest and most sacred of all other Laws, those which God hath riveted in our Souls, and written upon our Hearts: And that Mankind might have no pretence left to excuse them from these, the Christian Religion hath set us free from those many positive and outward observances, that the *Jewish* Religion was incumbred withall; that we might be wholly intent upon these great Duties, and mind nothing in comparison of the real and Substantial Virtues of a good Life.

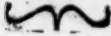
Thirdly, You see, in the last place, what is the best way to appease the

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displeasure of God towards a sinful Nation. God seems to have as great a Controversie with us, as he had with the People of *Israel*, and his wrath is of late years most visibly gone out against us; and proportionably to the full measure of our Sins, it hath been poured out upon us in full Vials. How have the Judgments of God followed us? And how close have they followed one another? What fearful Calamities have our eyes seen? enough to make the ears of every one that hears them to tingle. What terrible and hazardous Wars have we been engaged in? What a raging Pestilence did God send among us, that swept away thousands, and ten thousands in our streets? What a dreadful and fatal Fire, that was not to be checked and resisted in its course, 'till it had laid in Ashes one of the Greatest and Richest Cities in the World? What unseasonable Weather have we had of late? as if for the Wickedness of Men upon the Earth, the very *Ordinances of Heaven* were changed, and *Summer, and Winter, Seed-time, and Harvest*, had forgotten their appointed Seasons. And, which is more
and

and sadder than all this, what dangerous attempts have been made upon our Religion, by the restless Adversaries of it?

And now surely, *after all this is come upon us for our sins*, it is time for us to look up to him that smites us, and to think of taking up this quarrel. 'Tis time to enquire as they do in the Text, *Wherewith shall we come before the Lord, and bow our selves before the high God?* And we are apt to take the same course they did, to endeavour to appease God by some external Devotion. We have now betaken our selves to Prayer and Fasting, and 'twas very fit, nay necessary we should do so; but let us not think this is all God expects from us. These are but the *Means* to a further *End*, to oblige us for the future to the practice of a good Life. The outward profession of Religion is not lost amongst us, there appears still in Men a great and commendable zeal for the Reformed Religion, and there hath been too much occasion for it; but that which God chiefly expects from us, is Reformed

Vol. IV.  Lives. Piety and Virtue are in a great measure gone from among us, the Manners of Men are strangely corrupted, *the great and weighty things of the Law* are neglected, *Justice and Mercy, Temperance and Chastity, Truth and Fidelity*, so that we may take up *David's Complaint, Help Lord! for the Righteous man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the Children of Men.*

And 'till the Nation be brought back to a sober sense of Religion, from an airy and phantastical Piety, to real and unaffected Devotion, and from a factious contention about things indifferent, to the serious practice of what is necessary; from our violent heats and animosities, to a more peaceable temper, and by a mutual condescension on all sides, to a nearer and stronger union among our selves, 'till we recover in some measure, our ancient Virtue and Integrity of manners, we have reason to fear, that God will still have a Controversie with us, notwithstanding all our noise and zeal about Religion.

This is the true, this is the only course to appease the indignation of
God,

God, and to draw down his Favour and Blessing upon a poor distracted and gasping Nation. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Serm. I.

I have but one word more, and that is to put you presently upon the practice of one of these Duties that I have been perswading you to, and that is *Mercy*, and *Alms to the Poor*. If what I have already said, have had its effect upon you, I need not use any other Arguments; if it have not, I have hardly the heart to use any. I shall only put you in mind again, that God values this above all our external Devotion, *he will have mercy rather than sacrifice*; that this is the way to find mercy with God, and to have our Prayers speed in Heaven; and without this, all our Fasting and Humiliation signifies nothing. And to this purpose I will only read to you those plain and perswasive words of the Prophet, which do so fully declare unto us the whole Duty of this Day, and particularly

Vol. IV. larly urge us to this of Charity, *Isa.*
 58. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *Is it such a Fast*
 that I have chosen? a day for a Man to
 afflict his Soul? Is it to bow down his
 head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth
 and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this
 a Fast, and an acceptable Day unto the
 Lord? Is not this the Fast that I have
 chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to
 undoe the heavy burthens, and to let the
 oppressed go free, and that ye break every
 yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the
 hungry, and that thou bring the Poor
 that are cast out to thy house? when thou
 seeest the Naked, that thou cover him, and
 that thou hide not thy self from thine own
 Flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as
 the Morning, and thy Salvation shall
 spring forth speedily, and thy Righteous-
 ness shall go before thee, and the Glory of
 the Lord shall be thy reward. Then thou
 shalt call, and the Lord shall answer;
 thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I
 am.

SERMON

SERMON II.

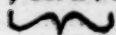
Instituted Religion not intended
to undermine Natural.

MATH. IX. 13.

*But go ye and learn what that meaneth ; I
will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.*

ONE of the most successful Attempts that have been made upon Religion, by the Devil and his Instruments, hath been by setting the Laws of God at variance with themselves, and by dashing the several parts of Religion, and the two Tables of the Law against one another, to break all in pieces ; and under a pretence of advancing that part of Religion which is *Instituted* and *Revealed*, to undermine and destroy that which is *Natural*, and of primary obligation.

To



To manifest and lay open the mischievous Consequences of this Design, I shall at this time (by God's Assistance) endeavour to make out these two Things.

First, That *Natural Religion* is the foundation of all *Instituted* and *Revealed Religion*.

Secondly, That no *Revealed* or *Instituted Religion* was ever designed to take away the obligation of *Natural Duties*, but to confirm and establish them.

And to this purpose, I have chosen these words of our Saviour for the foundation of my following Discourse; *But go ye and learn, what that meaneth; I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.* The occasion of which words was briefly this; The *Pharisees* found fault with him for keeping Company, and eating with *Publicans* and *Sinners*. He owns the thing which they objected to him, and endeavours to vindicate himself.

self from any crime or fault in so doing; and that, these two ways. Serm.II.

1. By telling them, that it was allowed to a Physician, and proper for his Office and Profession, to converse with the sick, in order to their Cure and Recovery. He may abstain, if he pleaseth, from the conversation of others; but the sick have need of him, and are his proper Care, and his Business and Employment lies among them; *he said unto them, they that be whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;* they who were already good, needed not to be call'd upon to amend and reform their lives; and they that were so conceited of their own Righteousness, as the *Pharisees* were, and so confident that they were sound and whole, would not admit of a Physician, and thereby rendered themselves incapable of Cure; and therefore he did not apply himself to them; but to the Publicans and Sinners, who were acknowledged on all hands, both by themselves and others, to be bad Men; so that it could
not

Vol. IV. not be denied to be the proper work
 of a Spiritual Physician to converse
 with such Persons.

2. By endeavouring to convince them
 of their Ignorance of the true nature
 of Religion, and of the Rank and
 Order of the several Duties thereby
 required; *but, gae and learn what that
 meaneth; I will have Mercy and not Sacri-
 fice;* which Saying is quoted by him,
 out of the Prophet, *Hosea*, chap. 6. 6.
*I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the
 knowledge of God more than burnt Offer-
 ings;* which Text our Saviour cites
 and applies upon two several Occa-
 sions; the considering and comparing
 of which, will give full Light to the
 true meaning of it.

The First is here in the Text, upon
 occasion of the *Pharisees* finding Fault
 with him, for conversing with *Publi-
 cans* and *Sinners*; the other is, *Math.*
12. 7. where the *Pharisees* blaming the
 Disciples of our Saviour for plucking
 the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath
 day, our Saviour tells them, *if he had
 known what this meaneth, I will have
 Mercy*

Mercy and not Sacrifice, ye would not have Sermon II.
condemned the guiltless; that is, if they
 had understood the true Nature of
 Religion, and what Duties of it are
 chiefly and in the first place to be re-
 garded, they would not have been so
 forward to censure this Action of his
 Disciples.

So that the plain meaning of this
 Saying is this, that in comparing the
 parts of Religion and the Obligation
 of Duties together, those Duties which
 are of *moral* and *natural* Obligation are
 most valued by God, and ought to
 take place of those which are *posi-
 tive and ritual*. *I will have Mercy, and
 not Sacrifice*, that is, *rather than Sacri-
 fice*, according to the true meaning of
 this *Hebrew Phrase*, which is to be
 understood in a comparative Sense, as
 is evident from the Text it self, in *Ho-
 sea, I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice*; and
*the knowledge of God rather than burnt
 offerings*; if they cannot be observed to-
 gether, let *Sacrifice* be neglected, and the
 work of *Mercy* be done.

And

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And the Reason of this seems very plain; because *shewing Mercy*, or *doing Good* in any kind is a prime Instance of those *moral Duties*, which do *naturally* and *perpetually* oblige; but *Sacrifice* is an Instance of *positive* and *ritual* Observances, and one of the chief of the kind: so that when *moral Duties*, and *ritual* Observances come in Competition, and do clash with one another, the Observation of a *Rite*, or *positive Institution*, is to give way to a *moral Duty*; and it is no Sin in that case to neglect the Observation of such a *Rite*, yea though it were commanded and appointed by God himself. And though this may seem to be a breach of the *letter* of the Law; yet it is according to the true *mind* and *meaning* of the Law; it being a tacit condition implied in all Laws of a *ritual* and *positive* Nature, *provided the observance of them be not to the hindrance and prejudice of any Duty, which is of a higher and better nature*; in that case the Obligation of it does for that time give way and is suspended.

And this will appear to be the true meaning of this Rule, by comparing
more

more particularly the Instances to Serm. 2.
which our Saviour applies it. His
Disciples passing through the Corn
on the Sabbath Day, and being hun-
gry, pluckt the Ears and did eat; this
our Saviour does justifie to be no
Breach of the Law of the Sabbath;
because in that case, and in such Cir-
cumstances, it did not oblige: for the
Disciples being call'd to attend upon
our Saviour, to be instructed by him
in the things which concerned the
Kingdom of God, that is, in the Do-
ctrine of the Gospel, which they
were to publish to the World, this
Attendance hindred them from mak-
ing necessary Provisions against the
Sabbath, they, in obedience to their
Master, being intent upon a better
Work; but that they might not starve,
the necessities of Nature must be pro-
vided for; and therefore it was fit,
that the Law of the Sabbath, which
was but *positive* and *ritual*, should give
way to an act of *Mercy*, and *Self-pre-*
servation; *If ye had known what this*
meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sa-
craifice, ye would not have condemned the
guiltless.

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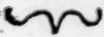
And



And the reason is the same as to any *Instrumental* part of Religion, by which I mean any thing which may be a *means* to promote Piety and Goodness; as Prayer, hearing the Word of God, keeping good Company, and avoiding bad; the Duties of this kind, our Saviour here in the Text (where he likewise applies this Rule) compares with *moral* Duties. To avoid the Company of vicious and wicked Persons, is a good means to preserve men from the contagion of their Vices, and was always esteemed a Duty among prudent men, both Jews and Heathens, and is in no wise disallowed by our Saviour: but yet not so a Duty, as to hinder a greater Duty, nor so strictly and perversely to be insisted upon, as if one ought not to converse with bad Men in any Case, or upon any Account, no not for so great and good an end as to reclaim them from their Vices. In this Case we ought to consider, that our first and highest obligation is to *moral* Duties, comprehended under *the love of God and our Neighbour*; among which one of the chief is to
do

do good to Men, and to shew Mercy and Pity to those that are in Misery ; and the greatest good that one Man can do to another, is to be instrumental to reclaim him from the Evil and Error of his Way ; because this is *to save his soul from death* ; and we cannot imagine that God ever intended, by any Rule of *prudence*, or *positive* Constitution of the Jewish Law, so to forbid their accompanying with bad and scandalous Men, that it should be unlawful to converse with them in order to their Recovery and Amendment ; *Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.*

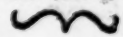
And St. Paul was of the same mind in the Precepts he gives concerning avoiding the Company of scandalous Christians, *2 Thes. 3. 14, 15. and if any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed ; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a Brother.* St. Paul qualifies his Precept, lest Christians should mistake it, and fall into the Jewish extream, not to converse with those whom they

Vol. IV.  esteemed scandalous and wicked upon any account whatsoever; no not in order to their Amendment and Reformation. The Bond of Intimacy and Friendship with bad Men ought to be broken; and yet the Bond of common Humanity may be as strong as ever. It is one thing to discountenance bad Men, to bring them to Shame, and a Sense of their Fault; and quite another thing to abandon them to Ruin; and even in case of notorious Heresie, or wickedness of Life, it is one thing to cut them off from the Society and Communion of Christians; and quite another, to cut them off from Humane Society, to cut their Throats, and to extirpate them out of the World.

And yet the matter was carried thus far by the furious Zeal of the Jews, when Christianity first appeared in the World; they thought that no Mercy in such Cases was the best Service that could be done, and the best Sacrifice that could be offered to Almighty God; and this Pattern hath been since, not only closely followed, but out-

out-done by the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of *Rome*; as we have too much Reason to remember upon * *this* day.

Serm. 2.



* Preach'd
Nov. 5.
88.

But to proceed in the farther explanation of the Text, the meaning whereof in short is this; that the *ritual* and *instrumental* parts of Religion, and all Laws and Duties concerning them, are of less Value and Esteem with God, than those which are of a *moral* Nature, especially the great Duties and Offices of *Piety* and *Humanity*, of the *love of God*, and of *our Neighbour*. And if we consider the matter well, we shall see the Reason of it to be very plain; because *natural* and *moral* Duties are approved of God for themselves and for their own sake, upon account of their own *natural* and *intrinsic* Goodness; but the *ritual* and *instrumental* parts of Religion, are only pleasing to God in order to these, and so far as they tend to beget and promote them in us; they are not *naturally* good in themselves, but are *instituted* and *appointed* by God for the sake of the other; and therefore great

Vol. IV. Reason there is that they should be subordinate, and give way to them, when they come in competition with one another.

For this is a known Rule, which takes place in all Laws, *that Laws of less importance should give way to those that are of greater; quoties Leges ex circumstantia colliduntur, ita ut utraque servari non potest, servanda est lex potior.* "When ever two Laws happen to be "in such circumstances as to clash "with one another, so that both of "them cannot be observed, that Law "which is better and of greater consequence is to be kept. And Tully gives much the same Rule in this matter. "In comparing of Laws (says he) "we are to consider which Law is "most useful, and just, and reasonable "to be observed. From whence it will follow, that when two Laws, or more, or how many soever they be, cannot be observed, because they clash with one another; *ea maxime conservanda putetur, quæ ad maximas res pertinere videatur.* "It is reasonable "that that Law should be observed, "which

“which is of greatest Moment and Sermon. 2.
“Concernment. 

By what hath been said, we may learn what is the meaning of this Saying, which our Saviour more than once cites out of the Prophet, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.*

From the words thus explained, I shall take occasion to prosecute the two Propositions which I mentioned before; namely,

First, That *Natural Religion* is the Foundation of *Instituted* and *Revealed Religion*.

Secondly, That no *Instituted Religion* was ever designed to take away the obligation of *Natural Duties*; but is intended to establish and confirm them. And both these are sufficiently grounded in the Reason of our Saviour's Discourse from this Rule, *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice.*

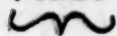
I. That *Natural Religion* is the Foundation of *Instituted* and *Revealed*

Vol. IV. Religion, and all *Revealed* Religion does suppose, and take for granted, the clear and undoubted Principles and Precepts of *Natural* Religion, and builds upon them. By *Natural* Religion, I mean obedience to the *Natural Law*, and the performance of such duties as *Natural Light*, without any *express* and *supernatural Revelation*, doth dictate to Men. These lye at the bottom of all Religion, and are the Great and Fundamental Duties which God requires of all Mankind; as, that we should love God, and behave our selves reverently towards him; that we should believe his Revelations; and testifie our dependance upon him, by imploring his aid and direction in all our necessities and distresses; and acknowledge our obligations to him for all the Blessings and Benefits which we receive; that we should moderate our Appetites, in reference to the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this World, and use them temperately and chastly; that we should be just and upright in all our Dealings with one another; true to our word, and faithful to our trust; and in all our words and actions observe

serve that Equity towards others, which we desire they should use towards us; that we should be kind, and charitable, merciful, and compassionate one towards another; ready to do good to all, and apt not only to pity, but to relieve them in their misery and necessity. These, and such like, are those which we call *Moral Duties*; and they are of *eternal* and *perpetual* obligation, because they do *naturally* oblige, without any *particular* and *express Revelation* from God. And these are the Foundation of *Revealed* and *Instituted Religion*, and all *Revealed Religion* does suppose them, and build upon them; for all *Revelation* from God, supposeth us to be *Men*, and alters nothing of those Duties to which we were *naturally obliged* before. And this will clearly appear, if we consider these *three* things;

First, That the Scripture every where speaks of these, as the main and Fundamental Duties of the *Jewish Religion*.

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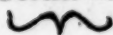
Secondly, That no *Instituted* Service of God, no *positive* part of Religion, was ever acceptable to him, when these were neglected.

Thirdly, That the great Design of the *Christian* Religion, was to restore and reinforce the practice of the *natural* Law.

1. That the Scripture every where speaks of these as the main and Fundamental Duties of the *Jewish* Religion. When our Saviour was ask'd *which was the first and great Commandment of the Law*; he answered, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self*. One would have expected he would have given quite another Answer, and have pitched upon some of those things which were so much magnified among the *Jews*, and which they laid so much weight upon; that he should have instanced in *Sacrifice*; or *Circumcision*, or the Law of the *Sabbath*; but he overlooks all these as considerable

derable in comparison, and instances only in those two great heads of Moral Duty, *the love of God, and our Neighbour*; which are of *natural and perpetual obligation*, and comprehend under them all other *Moral Duties*.

Serm. 2.



And these are those which our Saviour calls *the Law and the Prophets*, and which he says *he came not to destroy, but to fulfill*, Mat. 5. 17, 18, 19, 20. *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy; but to fulfill: for verily I say unto you, 'till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, 'till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be call'd the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say unto you, that except your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

That

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That our Saviour doth not here speak of the *Judicial* or *Ceremonial* Law of the *Jews*, but of the Duties of the *Moral* Law, will, I think, be very plain, from these following Considerations.

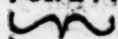
First, That the *Judicial* or *Ceremonial* Laws of the *Jews* were to *pass away*, and did so, not long after; but this Law, which our Saviour speaks of, was to be *perpetual* and *immutable*; for he tells us, *that Heaven and Earth should pass away, but one jot or one tittle of this Law should not pass.*

Secondly, The observation of the Law our Saviour speaks of, consisted in such things as the Scribes and Pharisees neglected; for he tells his Disciples, upon this occasion, *that except their righteousness did exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* But now the Scribes and Pharisees were the most accurate and punctual People in the World, in observing the Precepts of the *Judicial* and *Ceremonial* Law; they were so far from taking away any thing from these observances

servances, that they had added to them, and enlarged them, by innumerable Traditions of their own: so exact were they, that they would pay *tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin*, as our Saviour observes; but then they were extremely defective in *Moral Duties*; they were unnatural to their Parents, and would pretend that their Estates were consecrated to God, that under this pretence of *positive Religion*, they might excuse themselves from a *Natural Duty*, and let their Parents starve for God's sake; they were Covetous, and Unjust, and devoured *Widows houses*; in a word, our Saviour tells us, they neglected the *weightier Matters of the Law, Mercy, Judgment, and the love of God, and keeping faith with Men*; so that it is in these things, that our Saviour means, that *our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, viz. in the practice of Moral Duties*, which were neglected by them; and consequently 'tis the *Moral Law* which our Saviour came to confirm and establish.

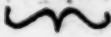
Thirdly,

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Thirdly, If we consider the instances which our Saviour gives in his following discourse, by which we may best judge what he means. He instances in *Murder*, and *Adultery*, and *Perjury*, which are undoubtedly forbidden by the *natural Law*; and then he instances in several *Permissions* which were indulged to them for the *Hardness of their Hearts*, but yet did intrench upon the *Dictates of right Reason*, and the *first and original Constitution of things*; as the permission of *Divorce* upon every slight occasion, and of *Revenge*, and *Retaliation of Injuries*.

Fourthly, If we consider, that by *the Law and the Prophets*, our Saviour means that which was principally designed and ultimately intended by them; which was the *Observation of moral Duties*; which as they were written in the two *Tables* by the immediate *Finger of God himself*, so are chiefly inculcated by the *Prophets*. And so we find this Phrase of *the Law and the Prophets*, elsewhere used by our Saviour,

our, when he mentions that great *Serm. 2.*
 Rule of Equity, that we should do to others 
 as we would have them do to us. *Matth.*

7. 12. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.* But how was this the Law and the Prophets, when this Rule was never so much as mentioned in either? Our Saviour means, that this is the Foundation of all those Duties of Justice and Mercy, which are so much inculcated in the Law and the Prophets.

So that our Saviour makes the Observation of *moral* Duties to be the principal Design of the Jewish Law, and as it were the Foundation of it, and therefore he calls *moral* Duties, *τὰ βαρύτερα τῶ νόμου*, the weightier matters of the Law, *Matth. 23. 23.* But ye (says) he to the Scribes and Pharisees) have neglected the weightier things of the Law, judgment, and mercy, and fidelity. The Scribes and Pharisees busied themselves chiefly about *ritual* Observances; but our Saviour tells them, that those other were the most considerable and important

Vol. IV. *tant Duties of the Law, and lay at the bottom of the Jewish Religion. And much the same enumeration the Prophet makes, where he compares Sacrifices and these moral Duties together, Mic. 6. 6, 7, 8. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of Oyl? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? He had required Sacrifices but had no regard to them in comparison with these.*

II. *No Instituted Service of God, no positive part of Religion whatsoever, was ever acceptable to God, when moral Duties were neglected; nay, so far from being acceptable to him, that he rejects them with Disdain and Abhorrence. To this purpose there are almost innumerable Passages in the Prophets.*

phets; *Isa. I. II. &c.* To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations; incense is an Abomination to me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is Iniquity, even the solemn meeting, and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; when ye make many prayers I will not hear. What is the reason of all this? Because they were defective in the moral Duties of Religion; so it follows; your hands are full of Blood; wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the Widow; come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; implying that till they had respect to moral Duties, all their external Worship and Sacrifices signified nothing And so likewise, *Isa. 66. 3.* He tells them that nothing could be more abominable than their Sacrifices, so long as they allowed themselves in wicked Practices; *He that killeth an Ox is as if he slew*

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a Man; he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dog's neck; he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swine's Blood; and he that burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol; yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their Soul delighteth in their Abominations. And to mention but one Text more out of the Old Testament, Jer. 7. 4, 5. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. Thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood. If they did not practise these Duties, and forbear those Sins, all the reverence for the temple and the worship of God signified nothing. You see in the Jewish Religion what it was that was acceptable to God for it self and its own sake, viz. the practice of moral Duties; and that all Instituted Religion, that did not promote and further these, or was destitute of them, was abominable to God. And under the Gospel our Saviour prefers a moral Duty before any gift we can offer to God, and will have it

it to take place, *Mat. 5. 23, 24.* If Ser. 2.
 thou bring thy gift unto the Altar, and
 there remembreſt that thy Brother hath
 ought againſt thee, leave there thy gift be-
 fore the Altar, and go thy way, firſt be re-
 conciled to thy Brother, and then come and
 offer thy gift.

But it ſhould ſeem by this, and what
 hath been ſaid before, that God pre-
 fers Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs to
 Men, before his own Worſhip: and
 obedience to the Precepts of the *Second*
 Table, before obedience to thoſe of
 the *First*.

But this does but ſeem ſo; all that
 can be collected from this paſſage of
 our Saviour, or any thing that hath
 been already ſaid, are only theſe two
 Things.

1: That God prefers the practice
 of the *Moral Duties* of the *ſecond Ta-*
 ble, before any *Inſtituted Worſhip*,
 ſuch as *Sacrifice* was; and before obe-
 dience to the *Laws of Religion*, which
 are meerly *poſitive*, tho' they do im-

Vol.IV. mediately concern the Worship of
 ~~~~~ God.

2. That if we neglect the Duties of the *second Table of Goodness and Righteousness* towards Men, God will not accept of our obedience to the Precepts of the *first*, nor of any act of *Religious Worship* that we can perform. This our Saviour means, when he says *leave there thy gift before the Altar, first be reconciled to thy Brother, then come and offer thy gift*; intimating, that so long as we bear a revengeful mind towards our Brethren, God will not accept of any *Gift or Sacrifice* that we can offer to him; or indeed of any act of *Religious Worship* that we can perform.

*Thirdly*, The great Design of the *Christian Religion* is to restore and reinforce the practice of the *natural Law*, or which is all one, of *Moral Duties*; and therefore our Saviour begins his first Sermon, by promising *Blessedness* to the practice of *these Duties*; of *Purity*, and *Meekness*, and *Righteousness* and *Peaceableness*, and  
*Merciful*

*Mercifulness, and Patience, and Submission* to the will of God under Persecutions and Sufferings for Righteousness sake; and tells us (as I shew'd before) that he came not to release Men from the practice of *these Duties*, but to oblige them thereto more effectually; and that as these were *the Law and the Prophets*, that is, the main Duties and the Foundation of the *Jewish Religion*, so were they much more to be so of the *Christian*. This the Scriptures of the New Testament do every where declare to be the great design of the Gospel, and the Christian Religion, to instruct us in these Duties, and to engage us effectually to the practice of them. In that known and excellent Text, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* *The grace of God (which is in and by the Doctrine of the Gospel) hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* And herein St. James tells us the true nature, and the force and vertue of the Christian Religion doth consist, *Jam. 1. 27.* *pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this,*

Vol. IV. *this, to visit the Fatherless and the Widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the World. And Chap. 3. 17. The wisdom which is from above (that is, that Heavenly and Divine Knowledge revealed to us by the Gospel) hath these Properties, and is apt to produce these effects; it is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated, full of mercy, and of good fruits.*

*And the planting of these dispositions in us is that which the Scripture calls the new Creature, and the Image of God, Eph. 4. 20. &c. The Apostle speaking there of the Vices and Lusts wherein the Gentiles lived, tells Christians that they were otherwise instructed by the Gospel; but ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to deceitful Lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness,*

*holiness, or, (as the words perhaps Ser. 12. may better be rendred) in the holiness of truth; for it immediately follows, wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his Neighbour.*

And this is that which the Apostle elsewhere makes to be *all in all*. in the Christian Religion. *In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision; but a new Creature, Gal. 6. 15.* which the Apostle in the Chapter before expresseth thus; *in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh (or is inspired) by Charity.* And yet more expressly, *1 Cor. 7. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the Commandments of God.* By the comparing of which Texts, it appears, that the main thing in Christianity, is the practice of *Moral Duties*, and this is *the new Creature*, and this the proper effect of the *Christian Faith* to produce these *Virtues* in us. And indeed, the great Design of the *Christian Religion* and every thing in it, of the love of God in giving his Son to die



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die for us, of the pardon of our Sins, and justification in his blood, of all the Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel, and of the assistance therein promised, is to engage, and encourage and enable to the practice of *Moral Duties*.

And thus I have done with the *First* thing I proposed to speak to, namely, that *Natural Religion* is the Foundation of *Instituted* and *Revealed Religion*; and all *Revealed Religion* does suppose it, and builds upon it. I proceed to the

*Second*, Namely, That no *Revealed* and *Instituted Religion* was ever designed to take away the obligation of *Natural Duties*, but was intended to confirm and establish them. And this also will be evident, if we consider these *three Things*.

1. That all *Revealed Religion* calls Men to the practice of *Natural Duties*. Thus the *Jewish Religion* did. The first Laws which God gave them, and which he distinguisht from the rest, by


by writing them in Tables of Stone Ser. 2,  
with his own Finger, were the Pre-  
cepts of the *Moral Law*. And the great  
business of the Prophets whom God  
raised up among them from time to  
time, was to reprove not so much  
their defects in their *Sacrifices*, and in  
the Duties of *Instituted Worship*, as  
the breach of the *natural Law* by their  
Vices and Immoralities; and to threaten  
them with the Judgments of God, if  
they did not reform and amend these  
faults.

And now under the Gospel, the pre-  
ceptive part of it is almost wholly made  
up of *Moral Duties*, namely, those  
which are comprehended under those  
*two great Commandments*, of the love  
of God, and our Neighbour. In the  
Christian Religion there is very little  
that is meerly *Positive* and *Instituted*,  
besides the *two Sacraments*, and praying  
to God in the Name and Mediation of  
Jesus Christ.

2. The most perfect Revelation that  
ever God made to Mankind (I mean  
that of the Christian Religion) doth  
furnish

Vol. IV. furnish us with the best helps and advantages for the performance of *Moral Duties*; it discovers our Duty more clearly to us; it offers us the greatest assistance to enable us to the performance of it; it presents us with the most powerful Motives and Arguments to engage us thereto; so that this Revelation of the Gospel is so far from weakning the obligation of *natural Duties*, that it confirms and strengthens it, and urgeth us more forcibly to the practice of them.

3. The *positive* Rites and Institutions of *Revealed Religion* are so far from entrenching upon the Laws of *Nature*, that they were always designed to be subordinate and subservient to them; and when ever they come in competition, it is the declared will of God, that *positive Institutions* should give way to *natural Duties*; and this I have shewn to be plainly the meaning of this Saying in the Text, *I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*. If Circumstances be such, that one part of Religion must give place, God will have the

the *Ritual* and *Instituted* part to give Ser. 2.  
way to that which is *Natural* and *Moral*. 

It is very frequent in Scripture, when the *Duties of Natural Religion*, and *Rites of Divine Institution* come in competition, to slight and disparage these in comparison of *Moral Duties*, and to speak of them as things which God hath no pleasure in, and which in comparison of the other he will hardly own that he hath commanded. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands? Isa. 1. 12. Thou desirest not Sacrifice, thou delightest not in Burnt-Offerings, Psal. 51. 16, Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl? He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy?

But God no where makes any comparison to the disadvantage of *Natural Duties*; he never derogated from them in any Case; he never said he would have such a thing, and not mercy, or that he had rather such a Rite of Religion

Vol. IV. *ligion should be performed, than that men should do the greatest good, and shew the greatest Charity to one another. It is no where made a question, will the Lord be pleased that we deal justly every Man with his Neighbour, and speak the truth one to another? that we be kind and tender-hearted, and ready to forgive? that we be willing to distribute and give Alms to those that are in need? there is no such question as this put in Scripture; nay it is positive in these Matters, that with such Sacrifices God is well pleased. I instance in this Virtue more especially of Kindness and Compassion, because it is one of the prime instances of Moral Duties; as Sacrifice is put for all the Ritual and Instituted part of Religion; and this disposition of Mind our Saviour makes the root of all Moral Duties; Love is the fulfilling of the Law; and the Apostle speaks of it as the great End and Scope of the Gospel; The end of the Commandment is Charity. And this temper and disposition of Mind he advanceth above Knowledge, and Faith, and Hope; The greatest of these is Charity; and without this, he will not allow a Man to be any thing*



thing in Christianity; *this* he makes our highest perfection and attainment, and that which abides and remains in the future state; *Charity never fails.* Ser. 2.

*This* our Saviour most effectually recommends to us, both in his Doctrine, and by his Example; *this* he presseth as the peculiar Law of his Religion, and the proper Mark and Character of a Disciple. *This* he requires us to exercise towards those who practise the contrary towards us; *to love our Enemies, and to do good to them that hate us.* And of *this*, he hath given us the greatest Example that ever was; when we were *Enemies* to him, he loved us so as hardly ever any Man did his *Friend*, so as to lay down his Life for us; and he Instituted the Sacrament for a Memorial of his love to Mankind, and to put us in mind how we ought to love one another.

And now the Application of what hath been said upon this Argument, to the occasion of *this* Day, is very obvious, and there are *two* very natural Inferences from it.

*First,*

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*First*, From what hath been said upon this Argument, it plainly appears what place *Natural* and *Moral* Duties ought to have in the Christian Religion; and of all *natural* Duties, *Mercy*, and *Goodness*. This is so primary a Duty of Humane Nature, so great and considerable a part of Religion, that all *positive Institutions* must give way to it, and nothing of that kind can cancel the obligation of it, nor justify the violation of this great and *Natural* Law. Our Blessed Saviour in his Religion hath declared nothing to the prejudice of it; but on the contrary, hath heightened our obligation to it, as much as is possible, by telling us that *the Son of Man came not to destroy Mens lives, but to save them.*

So that they know not what manner of Spirit they are of, who will kill Men to do God service; and to advance his Cause and Religion in the World, will break through all obligations of *Nature*, and *Civil Society*, and disturb the Peace and Happiness of Mankind.

Nor

Nor did our Saviour by any thing in his Religion design to release Men from the obligation of *Natural* and *Civil* Duties. He had (as one would imagine) as much Power as the *Pope*; but yet he deposed none of the Princes of this World, nor did Absolve their Subjects from their Fidelity and Obedience to them, for their opposition to his Religion; he assumed no such Power to himself (no not in *Ordine ad Spiritualia*) nor, that ever we read of, did he give it to any other. Whence then comes his *pretended Vicar* to have this Authority? And yet the horrid attempt of *this* Day was first designed; and afterwards carried on, in prosecution of the *Pope's Bull* of Excommunication, and was not so much the effect of the despair and discontent of that Party here in *England*, as the Natural Consequence of their Doctrines of *Extirpating Hereticks*, and *Deposing Kings*, and *Absolving Subjects from their Allegiance to them*.

No Zeal for any *positive* Institution in Religion; can justify the Violation

Vol. IV. on of the *natural* Law, the Precepts whereof are of *primary* and *indispensable* Obligation. The *Pope's* Supremacy is not so clear, as the Duty of *Obedience to civil Government*; nor is *Transubstantiation* so plainly revealed in Scripture, as it is both in Nature and Scripture, that we should *do no murder*. And yet how many thousands have been put to Death, because they could not understand *this hard word*, and believe *this impossible thing*! And yet if the *supremacy of the Pope* were clearly of *Divine Right*, and the *Doctrine of Transubstantiation* as plain as the institution of the Sacrament; yet these being but *positive* matters in Religion, there would be no reason to *kill men* for not understanding and believing these things; nay it would be contrary to Religion to do it; because the Law of *Mercy and Humanity*, which is the Law of *Nature*, ought not to be violated for the promoting of any *positive institution*; and God hath plainly said, that *he will have Mercy rather than Sacrifice*; yea rather than *the Sacrifice of the Mass*, if it were what they pretend it is, *the offering of the natural body and blood of Christ*;

Christ ; because it would be needless : for Propitiation of Sin being once made by *Christ's offering himself once for all* upon the Cross, *there needs no more Sacrifice for sin.* Nay, I will go further yet ; I had rather never administer the Sacrament, nor ever receive it, than take away any Man's Life about it ; because the Sacrament is but a *positive* Rite and Institution of the Christian Religion, and God prefers *Mercy*, which is a Duty of *natural* Religion, before any *Rite* or *Institution* whatsoever. Besides, that all acts of Malice and Cruelty are directly contrary to the particular Nature and Design of this blessed Sacrament, which is to commemorate the Sufferings of the Son of God, for our sakes, and to give us an example of the greatest Love that ever was, and thereby to excite us to the Imitation of it.

2. What hath been said gives us a right Notion and Character of that Church and Religion, which prefers the *positive* Rites and *Institutions* of Religion, and the observance of them, to those Duties which are of *natural* and



Vol. IV. *Eternal Obligation, Mercy and Goodness, Fidelity and Justice; and which for the sake of a pretended Article of Religion, or Rite of Worship, (which if it were certain that they were revealed, and instituted by God are yet meerly positive) will break the greatest of God's Commandments, and teach men so.*

It is too plain to be denied, that the Principles and Precepts of *natural Religion* were never so effectually undermined, and the *Morality* of the Christian Religion never so intolerably corrupted and debauched, by any thing that ever yet had the face of Religion in the World, as by the allowed Doctrines and Practices of the Church of *Rome*, and this out of a blind and furious Zeal for some Imaginary Doctrines and Rites of the Christian Religion, which at the best are of meer *positive Institution*, and of the same rank among *Christians*, that *Sacrifices* were in the *Jewish Religion*. For which we need go no further for an instance, than in the Occasion of *this Day's Solemnity*; upon which Day, (about fourscore years ago) there

was

to undermine Natural Religion.

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was designed a mighty Sacrifice indeed; the greatest and richest burnt-offering that ever was pretended to be offered up to Almighty God, by those of any Religion whatsoever; not the blood of Bulls and Goats, but of King, and Princes, and Nobles, more in value, than thousands of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl; than all the Beasts of the Forrest, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills.

Here was a prodigious Sacrifice indeed; but where was Mercy? the thing God chiefly desires, and which above all other things is acceptable to him; no Mercy, not even to those of their own Religion, whom these nice and tender Casuists, after a solemn debate of the Case, had resolved to involve in the same common Destruction with the rest; rather no mercy, than that this Sacrifice which their mad zeal had prompted them to, should be omitted.

To conclude, They that can do such inhumane things, and think them to be Religion, do not understand the nature of it, but had need to be taught the first Rudiments of natural Religion;

G 2

that

Vol. IV. that *natural Duties* are not to be violated upon pretence, no, nor for the sake of *positive Institutions*; because *natural Religion* is the *Foundation* of that which is *instituted*; and therefore to violate any *natural Duty* for the sake of that which is *instituted*, is for Religion to undermine and blow up it self. Let those who *do such things, and teach men so, go and learn what that meaneth; I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.*

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## SERMON

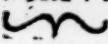
# SERMON III.

Christianity doth not destroy,  
but perfect the Law of Moses.

MATTHEW V. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the  
Law or the Prophets. I am not come  
to destroy, but to fulfill.*

**T**HERE is no Saying in the  
whole Gospel, which the Jews  
did so frequently object to the  
Christians as this of our Blessed Savi-  
our, as if his Words and Actions were  
plainly repugnant, and contrary to one  
another: for when it is evident, say  
they, that he took away so many  
Ceremonies, Purifications, Distincti-  
ons of Meats, Sacrifices, Judicial Laws,  
and many other things; yet he says,

Vol. IV. *he came not to destroy the Law or the*  
 *Prophets*; so that it is plain, that he  
 did throw down the Law of *Moses*,  
 and in so doing contradicted his own  
 Saying, that he did not intend to de-  
~~stroy the Law.~~ To clear our Saviour's  
 words of this Objection, it will be re-  
 quisite to consider the Scope and De-  
 sign of his Discourse in this Chapter,  
 by which we shall fully understand  
 the sense and meaning of these Words  
 in the Text.

Our Saviour in this Sermon, (which  
 contains the Sum and Substance of  
 his Religion) doth earnestly recom-  
 mend to his Disciples and Followers,  
 and strictly enjoyns the perfect Pra-  
 ctice of all Goodness and Virtue, de-  
 claring to them, that he came to bring  
 in and establish that Righteousness,  
 which the Jewish Religion indeed aim-  
 ed at, but through the Weakness and  
 Imperfection of that Dispensation, was  
 not able to effect and accomplish. And to  
 take away all suspicion of a Design, to  
 contradict the former Revelations of  
 God, made to the Jews by *Moses* and  
 the *Prophets*, or to destroy their Di-  
 vine



but perfect the Law of Moses.

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vine Authority, by carrying on a Design contrary to them, I say, to prevent any imagination of this kind, he does here in the Text expressly declare the contrary; *Think not, &c.* Intimating that some either did, or at least might be apt to suspect, that his Design was to destroy the obligation of the Law, and to undermine the Authority of *Moses* and the Prophets; to free them from this jealousy, he declares plainly, that he had no such thought and intention, it was far from him.

*I am not come to destroy, καταλῦσαι, to abrogate or dissolve the Law, to encourage Men to the breach and violation of it; for the word is of the same sense with λύω, at the 19. ver. whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments; and with καταργῆσαι, Rom. 3. 31. νόμον ἐν καταργεῖν, do we then make void the Law by Faith? Which is the same question with that of the same Apostle, Gal. 3. 21. Is the Law then against the Promises of God? that is, are the Law and the Gospel contrary? do they contradict one another; So that*

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Vol. IV. the meaning of our Saviour's Declaration is this, that he was not come to *dissolve*, and *abrogate*, and *make void* the Law, or to encourage Men to the breach of it; that the Precepts of his Religion were in no wise contrary to those of the Law and the Prophets, did not thwart and oppose them, or any ways contradict the main design and intention of *the Law and the Prophets*, that is, of *the Jewish Religion*; for so *the Law and the Prophets* do frequently signify, *Mat. 7. 12. therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets*; that is, this is the main scope and intention of what *your Religion*, contained in *the Law and the Prophets*, teacheth, concerning your Duty to one another. So likewise, *Mat. 22. 40. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*; that is, this is the sum of all the Duties of Religion; to these two Laws, all that the Jewish Religion teacheth, may be refer'd. *I am not come to destroy but to fulfill*; to carry on the same Design which was intended by the Jewish Religion, and to

to perfect and accomplish it ; to supply all the defects and weaknesses and imperfections of that dispensation ; this is the plain meaning of this caution and declaration of our Saviour's ; *Think not, &c.* Ser. 3.

For the clearing of this Matter, viz. That the Design of our Saviour's Doctrine and Religion, is not contrary to those former Revelations, which God made to the Jews by Moses and the Prophets ; this will evidently appear, whether we consider the Prophecies and Predictions of the Old Testament, or the Laws and Precepts therein contained.

First, the Prophecies and Predictions of the Old Testament ; our Saviour came not to contradict and overthrow these ; but to fulfill them. The chief Predictions of the Law and the Prophets were concerning the *Messias*, and his Spiritual Kingdom, In the Law it was foretold, that God would raise to them a Prophet like unto Moses, whom they ought to hear and obey ; and to him all the Prophets of the Old Testament gave

Vol. IV. *gave witness*, foretelling the time of his coming, his extraction, the manner and circumstances of his Birth, the Purity and Efficacy of his Doctrine, the Actions and Miracles of his Life, his Passion, Death, and Burial, with the particular Circumstances of them, his Resurrection from the Dead, and his Ascension into Heaven, and Exaltation at the right hand of God; so that this part of the *Law and Prophets* he did *accomplish and fulfil* in a most eminent and remarkable manner; all things that the Prophets had foretold concerning the Messias, were punctually made good in the Person, and Actions, and Sufferings of our Saviour.

*Secondly*, As to the Laws and Precepts of the Jewish Religion, the Doctrine and the Laws of Christianity did not clash with them, nor properly *abrogate* them, and *make them void*, especially as to the *Moral Precepts*, which were the very Life and Spirit, the ultimate Scope and Design of that Religion; nay, so far was it from doing so, that the main and proper intention of Christianity, was to *clear*  
and

and *establiſh* that, which was the main Ser. 3.  
design of *the Law and Prophets*, to perfect *the Law* in this part, and to raise and  
*advance Morality* to its highest pitch,  
to supply all the defects and imperfe-  
ctions of the Jewish Religion, and to  
make Men much better than that weak  
and imperfect Institution was able to  
do. This was the great Design of  
Christianity; and it is very probable  
that our Saviour had a principal, if not a  
sole respect to the Precepts of *the Mo-  
ral Law*, when he here says, that he  
*came not to destroy the Law and the Pro-  
phets, but to perfect and fulfill them*; as  
I shall have occasion by and by to  
shew more at large.

But that we may give a full Answer  
to the Objection of the *Jews* against  
this Saying of our Saviour's, I shall  
shew that he did not come to thwart  
and contradict, and properly to abro-  
gate and make void the Jewish Law, in  
any part of it, neither the Civil and  
Judicial, nor the Ritual and Ceremoni-  
al, much less the Moral and Natural  
Precepts of it. This is more than I think  
to be absolutely necessary, to recon-  
cile



Vol.IV. cile this Saying of our Saviour with the rest of his Doctrine and Actions; for tho' he had properly *abrogated the Ceremonial Law*, and in no sense *fulfill'd it*; yet, notwithstanding this, it may be true, that *he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets*; that is, to *destroy the obligation of Moral Duties*, which he speaks of in this Chapter, and elsewhere declares to be the ultimate scope, the sum and substance of *the Law and the Prophets*; For if the *Ceremonial Law* was not designed by God to be *perpetual*, but to give way to a *more perfect dispensation*; then our Saviour did no way *thwart and contradict the Law and the Prophets*; by *abrogating the Ceremonial Law*, at that time, when God designed that a period should be put to it. But yet for the fuller satisfaction to this Objection, I shall shew that our Saviour did not properly *abrogate* any part of the *Jewish Law*, no not the *Ritual and Ceremonial* part of it; but did *fulfill it*.

*First*, not their *Civil and Judicial* Laws. These, in the original intention of them, were not Laws designed for Mankind,

Mankind, but suited and fitted to the Ser. 3.  
disposition and temper, the Condition  
and Circumstances of a particular Peo-  
ple and Nation; to these our Saviour  
taught obedience, and paid it himself,  
and never did any thing contrary to  
them, nor in the least weaken the ob-  
ligation of them; but they continued  
in full force, 'till that Nation and  
Commonwealth was dissolved. So  
that these Laws were no way impeach-  
ed or *abrogated* by the Christian Re-  
ligion; but they fell, for want of a  
subject to exercise their power upon,  
and because the People that were to  
be governed by them were destroyed  
or dissipated; and tho' they neither are,  
nor ever were obligatory to other Na-  
tions, as given by *Moses*, and as they  
were the peculiar Laws of a particular  
Nation; yet the Natural Reason and  
Equity of them, so far as it concerned  
Mankind, is duly considered and re-  
garded by us, and many of these  
Laws are adopted into the Laws of  
most Christian Nations. It is plain  
then, that this part of the Jewish Law  
received no prejudice by Christianity,  
but continued in full force, so long as  
that

Vol.IV. that Nation and Commonwealth lasted,  
 which was to be governed by it.

*Secondly*, As to the *Ritual* and *Ceremonial* part of the Jewish Law, which consisted in Circumcision, and Purifications, and Sacrifices, in distinction of Meats, and Times, and innumerable other Rites and Observances; this was not properly *abrogated* and *made void* by the coming of Christ, but *fulfill'd* and *made good* by him. The Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, were the Types and Shadows of those *future good things* which were promised under the Gospel, a kind of rude draught of a better and more perfect Institution, which was designed, and at last *finisht* and *perfected* by the Christian Religion. This account the Apostle gives of the *legal Rites and Observances*, Col. 2. 16, 17. *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ; that is, he is the substance and reality of all those things, which were shadowed and figured by those legal observances,*

vances. And so the Apostle to the Heb. Ser. 3. calls the Priests and Sacrifices of the Law, the *Examples and shadows of Heavenly things*, Chap. 8. 5. and so Chap. 10. 1. *the Law having a Shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*, that is, being but an *obscure Type*, and not a *perfect Representation* of the Blessings and Benefits of the Gospel, which we now have in *truth and reality*. Now Reason will tell us, that the Laws concerning these *Types and Shadows*, were only to continue 'till the *Substance* of the things signified by them should come, and that they would be of no longer use, when *that more perfect Institution*, which was figured by them, should take place, and then they would expire, and become void of themselves, because the reason and use of them ceasing, they must necessarily fall,

But they did not expire immediately upon the coming of Christ, and therefore he himself submitted to these Laws, so long as they continued in force; he was Circumcised, and presented in the Temple, and performed all other Rites required

Vol. IV. required by the Law, *that first Covenant* to which these Laws and Ordinances belonged, continuing in force 'till the ratification of *the second Covenant* by the death of Christ, and then these Laws expired, or rather were *fulfill'd*, and had their accomplishment in the Sacrifice of Christ, which made all the Sacrifices and other Rites of the Jewish Religion needless, and of no use for the future; Christ having by this *one Sacrifice of himself, perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, as the same Apostle speaks, *Heb. 10. 14.* So that Christ did not properly *abrogate* and *repeal* those *Ritual and Ceremonial Laws*; but they having continued as long as they were designed to do, and there was any use of them, they *abated* and *ceased* of themselves.

And that the death of Christ was the time of their expiration, because then the *new Covenant* took place, St. Paul expressly tells us, *Eph. 2. 15. having abolisht or voided in his flesh the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances; and this v. 16. he is said to have done by his Cross; and more plainly, Col. 2. 14. blotting*



blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances, which was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Cross. Ser. 3.

So that you see that even the Ceremonial Law was not so properly abrogated by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ, but rather had its accomplishment, and attained its end in the Sacrifice of Christ; which by the Eternal efficacy of it to the expiation of Sin, and the purifying of our Consciences, hath made all the Sacrifices and Washings, and other Rites of the Ceremonial Law, for ever needless and superfluous.

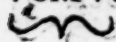
Thirdly, But especially as to the Moral Law, and those Precepts which are of Natural and Perpetual obligation, our Saviour did not come either to dissolve, or to lessen and slacken the obligation of them.

And of this I told you our Saviour doth principally, if not solely speak here in the Text, as will appear to any one that shall attentively consider the scope of his Discourse. In the  
H begin.

Vol. IV. beginning of his Sermon, he promiseth  
 ~~~~~ Blessing to those, and those only who  
 were endowed with those Virtues
 which are required by the Precepts of
 the *Moral Law*, or comprehended in
 them; and then he tells them, that
 Christians must be very eminent and
 conspicuous for the practice of them,
v. 16. Let your light so shine before Men,
that they may see your good works, and glo-
rifie your Father which is in Heaven; and
 then he cautions them not to entertain
 any such imagination, as if he intended
 to dissolve the obligation of the *Law*,
 and to free Men from the practice of
Moral Duties, which probably some
 might have suggested against him;
think not that I am come to destroy the
Law and the Prophets; as if he had said,
 you cannot entertain any such conceit,
 if you consider that the Precepts which
 I inculcate upon you, and those Vir-
 tues, the practice whereof I recom-
 mend to you, are the same which are
 contained in the *Law and the Prophets*.
 So that I am so far from crossing the
 main design of the *Law and the Prophets*,
 and taking away the obligation of
Moral Duties enjoined by the Jewish
 Religion,

Religion, that I come purposely to *Ser. 3.*
carry on the same Design to further per-
fection, to give a more perfect and clear
Law, and to give a greater enforcement
and encouragement to the practice of
Moral Duties; these were always the
sum and substance of Religion, the ul-
timate design of the Law and the Pro-
phets, and therefore I am so far from
discharging Men from the obligation
of the Moral Precepts of the Law, that
I come to bind them more strongly
upon you. And verily I say unto you,
that is, I solemnly declare, that whoso-
ever shall break one of these least Com-
mandments, and shall teach Men so, he
shall be called the least in the Kingdom of
Heaven; that is, he shall in no wise
enter therein. You think the Scribes
and Pharisees very Pious and Excellent
Men, and to have attained to a high
pitch of Righteousness; but I say unto
you, that except your Righteousness shall
exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and
Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into
the Kingdom of Heaven. And then he
instanceth in several Precepts of the
Moral Law, which in the letter of
them, especially as they were inter-

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preted by the Teachers of the Law among the Jews, were very much short of that Righteousness and Perfection which he now requires of his Disciples and Followers. So that his whole Discourse is about Precepts and Obligations of the *Moral Law*, and not a word concerning the *Ritual and Ceremonial Law*; which makes me very prone to think, that our Saviour's meaning in the Text is this, that his Religion was so far from thwarting and opposing that which was the main design of the *Law and the Prophets*, that is, of the *Jewish Religion*, that the principal intention of Christianity was to advance the practice of goodness and virtue, by strengthening the obligation of *Moral Duties*, and giving us a more perfect Law and Rule of Life, and offering better Arguments, and greater Encouragements to the obedience of this Law. Therefore for the fuller explication and illustration of this Matter, I shall endeavour to clear these three Points.

First, That the Main and Ultimate Design of the *Law and the Prophets*, was

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but perfect the Law of Moses.

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to engage Men to the practice of *Moral Duties*, that is, of real and Substantial Goodness.

Ser. 3.

Secondly, That the Law of *Moses*, or the dispensation of the Jewish Religion, was comparatively very weak, and insufficient to this purpose,

Thirdly, That the Christian Religion hath supplied all the defects, and weaknesses and imperfections of that dispensation; these three Particulars will fully clear our Saviour's meaning in this Text.

First, That the Main and Ultimate Design of the Law and the Prophets, was to engage Men to the practice of *Moral Duties*; that is, of real and substantial Goodness, consisting in those Virtues which our Saviour mentions at the beginning of this Sermon; *Humility*, and *Meekness*, and *Mercy*, and *Righteousness*, and *Purity*, and *Peaceableness*. This our Saviour more than once tells us was the sum and substance, the main scope and design of the whole Doctrine of the Law and the

Vol. IV. *Prophets. Mat. 7. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. And Mat. 22. 40. That the love of God and our Neighbour, those two great Commands, to which all Moral Duties are reduced, are the two great hinges of the Jewish Religion; on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets. St. Paul calls Love, the fulfilling of the whole Law; Rom. 13. 10. St. James, the Perfect and the Royal Law, as that which hath a Sovereign influence upon all parts of Religion. And therefore the Apostle Rom. 3. 21. tells us, that this more perfect Righteousness which was brought in by the Gospel, or the Christian Religion, is witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. And indeed the Prophets every where do slight and undervalue the Ritual and Ceremonial part of Religion, in comparison of the practice of Moral Duties. Isa. 1. 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? bring no more vain oblations; your New Moons and your appointed Feasts my soul hateth. But what then are the things that are acceptable*
to

to God? He tells us at the 16th ver. *wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow.* And by the Prophet *Jeremiah* God tells that People, that the business of *Sacrifices* was not the thing primarily designed by God, but obedience to the *Moral Law*; the *Ritual Law* came in upon occasion, for the prevention of *Idolatry*, and by way of condescension to the temper of that People; and thus *Maimonides* and the Learned Jews understand these words, *Jer. 7. 22, 23. I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice, and walk in all the ways that I have commanded, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my People.* So likewise in the Prophet *Hosea*, God plainly prefers the *Moral* before the *Ritual* part of Religion, as that which was principally designed and intended by him, *Hos. 6. 6. I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the*

Vol. IV. *knowledge of God more than Burnt-Offerings ; but most plainly and expressly, Mich. 6. 6. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl? He hath shewed thee O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? These it seems were the great things which God stood upon and required of Men even under that imperfect dispensation; and these are the very things which the Christian Religion doth so strictly enjoin and command; so that this Righteousness which the Gospel requires, was witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets. I proceed to the*

Second Point, That the Law of Moses, or the dispensation of the Jewish Religion, was comparatively very weak, and insufficient to make Men truly good, and for the promoting of real and inward righteousness; it gave Laws indeed to this purpose, but those not so clear and perfect, or at least
not

not so clearly understood, as they are now under the Gospel; and it made no express promises of inward Grace, and assistance, to quicken and strengthen us in the doing of our Duty; it made no explicit promises of any blessing and reward to the doing of our duty beyond this Life; so that the best and most powerful Arguments and Encouragements to Obedience, were either wholly wanting or very obscurely revealed under this dispensation. Ser. 3.

And this insufficiency of the Jewish dispensation, both to our justification and sanctification, to the reconciling of us to God, and the making of us really good, the Apostle frequently inculcates in the New Testament; *St. Paul, Acts 13. 38, 39. Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified, from all those things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses; and Rom. 8. 3. What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; that is, by reason of*
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Vol. IV. the carnality of that dispensation, consisting in the purification of the body. *Gal. 3. 21.* he calls it a Law unfit to give Life; *If there had been a Law which could have given Life, verily Righteousness had been by the Law.* And the Apostle to the Hebrews, Ch. 8. 6, 7, 8, &c. finds fault with the dispensation of the Law, for the lowliness and meanness of its Promises, being only of Temporal good things; and for want of conferring an inward and a powerful Principle to enable Men to obedience; but now hath he obtained (speaking of Christ) a more excellent Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises; for if that first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for a second; and this second and better Covenant, he tells us, was foretold by the Prophets of the Old Testament; for finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and the House of Judah; not according to the Covenant which I made with their Fathers.

thers. For this is the Covenant which Ser. 3.
I will make with the House of Israel
after those days, saith the Lord. I will
put my Laws into their minds, and
write them in their hearts. And Chap.
10. 1, 4. he shews the inefficacy of
their Sacrifices for the real expiation
of Sin, the Law having but a shadow
of good things to come, and not the
lively representation of the things them-
selves, can never with those Sacrifices
which they offer'd year by year continu-
ally, make the comers thereunto perfect;
for it is not possible that the blood of
Bulls and Goats should take away sins.

I should now have proceeded to the
Third Particular; namely, that the
Christian Religion hath supplied all
the defects and weakness and imperfec-
tion of the Jewish dispensation; but
that I shall not now enter upon, but
make one plain inference from the sub-
stance of what I have already discour-
sed upon this Argument.

If our Saviour came not to dissolve
and loosen the obligation of Moral Du-
ties, but to confirm and establish it, and
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Vol. IV. *to enforce and bind the practice of these Duties more strongly upon us, then they do widely and wilfully mistake the design of Christianity, who teach that it dischargeth Men from the obligation of the Moral Law, which is the Fundamental and avowed Principle of the Antinomian Doctrine, but directly contrary to this Declaration of our Saviour in the Text, that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to perfect and fulfil them; (nor to take away the obligation of a Law, is plainly to destroy and make it void;) and contrary to the Apostle's solemn resolution of this matter, Rom. 3. 31. Do we then make void the Law through Faith? That is, does the Gospel destroy and take away the obligation of the Law? God forbid, yea we establish the Law; the Christian Religion is so far from designing or doing any such thing, that it gives new strength and force to it,*

But surely they that teach this Doctrine, did never duly consider that terrible threatning of our Saviour after the Text, which seems to be so directly level'd at them; *whosoever shall break*

but perfect the Law of Moses.

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break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach Men so, he shall be call'd the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; for how can Men more effectually teach the violation, not only of the least, but of the greatest of God's Commandments, than by declaring that the Gospel hath set Men free from the obligation of the Moral Law? which is in effect to say, that Christians may act contrary to all the Duties of Morality, that is, do the most impious things in the World, without any offence against God, and notwithstanding this, continue to be his Children, and highly in the favour of God.

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And all the security they have against this impious Consequence, is that weak and slender pretence, "that gratitude and love to God, will preserve them from making this ill use of the grace of the Gospel, and oblige them to abstain from Sin, and to endeavour to please God as much as any Law could do. But then they do not consider the nonsense of this; for there can be no such thing as Sin, if the obligation of the Law be taken away; for where there

Vol. IV. *there is no Law, there can be no Transgression, as the Apostle, and common Reason likewise tells us; so that the Law being removed and taken away, all Actions become indifferent, and one thing is not more a sin or offence against God than another. And what then is it they mean that Gratitude will oblige Men to, or preserve them from? When there can be no such thing as sin or duty, as pleasing or offending God, if there be no Law to oblige us to the one, or restrain us from the other.*

And what is, if *this be not, to turn the grace of God into wantonness, and to make Christian Liberty a Cloak, for all sorts of Sins? A Man cannot do a greater despite to the Christian Religion, nor take a more effectual course to bring it into contempt, and to make it to be hiss'd out of the World, than to represent it as a lewd and licentious Doctrine, which gives Men a perfect discharge from all the Duties of Morality, and obligeth them only to believe confidently, that Christ hath purchased for them a liberty to do what they will, and that upon these terms, and no other, they are*

but perfect the Law of Moses.

III

are secure of the favour of God in this Ser. 3.
World, and Eternal Salvation in the
other. This is the sum and the plain
result of the *Antinomian Doctrine*, the
most pernicious *Hereſie*, and most di-
rectly destructive of the great End and
Design of Christianity, that ever yet
was broached in the World. But ye
have not so learned Christ, if so be ye
have heard him, and have been taught by
him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye
put off concerning your former conversa-
tion, the old Man, which is corrupt ac-
cording to deceitful Lusts, and that ye be
renewed in the spirit of your mind, and
put on the new Man, which after God is
created in Righteousness, and true Ho-
liness.

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the source of the favour of God in this
world, and Eternal Salvation in the
other. This is the first and the plain
will of the Lord, that we should
in our particular lives, and in all the
indefinite of the great land and
begin of Christianity, that ever yet
was preached in the World. But ye
have not so known Christ, if ye be
his hand, and have been taught by
him, as the words is in John, that ye
put off concerning your former corrup-
tion, the old Man, which is corrupt ac-
cording to deceitful Lusts, and that ye be
renewed in the spirit of your mind, and
put on the new Man, which after God is
created in Righteousness, and true Ho-

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Christianity doth not destroy,
but perfect the Law of Moses.

MATTHEW V. 17.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the
Law and the Prophets. I am not come
to destroy, but to fulfil.*

I Have consider'd this Saying of our
Saviour's with respect to *the Moral
Law*, and those Precepts which are
of *Natural and Perpetual* force, and
that our Saviour did not come either
to *dissolve or loosen* the obligation of
them; for the illustration of which, I
propounded to clear these *three Points*.

First, That the main and ultimate
design of *the Law and the Prophets*, was

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to

Vol.IV. to engage Men to the practice of *Moral Duties*, that is, of real and Substantial goodness.

Secondly, That the Law of Moses, or the dispensation of the Jewish Religion, was comparatively very weak, and insufficient to make Men truly good, and ineffectual to promote inward and real Righteousness. These two points I have spoken to. I shall now proceed to the

Third, Namely, that the Christian Religion doth supply all the defects and weaknesses and imperfections of the Jewish dispensation.

The Jewish Religion had very considerable advantages above the mere Light of Nature, which was all that the Heathen World had to conduct them towards Eternal Happiness; the Jews had the knowledge of the one true God, and very signal and particular Testimonies of the Divine Providence, which did naturally tend to beget in them good hopes of a future Life, and the rewards of another World; they had

had the Natural Law revealed, and the main Precepts of it written with God's own hand, and by *Moses* delivered to them; by which means they had a more certain and distinct knowledge of their duty; they had Prophets frequently sent to them, to admonish them of their Duty; and to exhort them to Repentance, and to warn them of approaching judgments. They had good encouragement given to hope for the pardon of Sin, by God's appointment of several ways of expiation; which, how unlikely soever they were to be available to the effectual expiation of Sin, yet they did signify that the Divine Nature was placable, and did seem to figure some more effectual way, designed by God for that purpose, that should be exhibited in due time. And finally they had most express promises and threatenings of Temporal Blessings and judgments, to encourage them in their obedience, and to deter them from the transgression of God's Laws. These Advantages the Jews plainly had above the rest of the World, *God did not deal*

*Vol. IV. so with other Nations, neither had the
Heathen such a knowledge of Gods Laws.*

But notwithstanding this, the Jewish Religion was very short and defective, very weak and ineffectual to the great end of Righteousness and true Holiness, and to raise Men to that perfection of goodness, of which Humane Nature through the grace of God is capable; and therefore there wanted a more perfect Institution, to supply the defects and weakness and imperfection even of that Divine Revelation which God had made to the Jews, and really to effect and accomplish that which the Jewish Religion attempted and aimed at, and was but, as I may say, rudely begun under that imperfect Institution. And this the Gospel, or the Christian Religion revealed by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath fully effected, as will evidently appear by a particular Survey and Consideration of the main defects of the Jewish Religion, which I shall shew to be all perfectly made up by the Revelation of the Gospel, and the

but perfect the Law of Moses.

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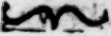
the Doctrine of Christianity, in these Ser. 4.
following Particulars.

First, it was a great defect of the Jewish Religion, that a considerable part of it was merely *external*, concerning the purification of *the Body and the Flesh*, and only figurative of that *inward Purity and real Righteousness*, which renders Men truly good, and like to God; for which reason the Jewish Institution is by the Apostle to the *Hebrews* call'd *the Law of a Carnal Commandment*, *Heb. 7. 16*; and *Ch. 9. 10*, is said to consist only (that is chiefly) in *meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal Ordinances imposed on them until the time of Reformation*; that is, 'till the *Messias* should come, and give such Laws as should really tend to reform the Hearts and Lives of Men; and therefore these Laws and Ordinances are call'd *poor pitiful Elements*, and *the Rudiments of the World*, fitted rather for *Children* in understanding and goodness, than to bring *Men* to any maturity and perfection in goodness. All their Rites of purification did only *sanctifie to the purifying of the Flesh*; but

Vol. IV. *did not purge the Conscience from dead works, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaks, Ch. 9. 13, 14. they could not make those that performed and observed them perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience, v. 9. that is, these Laws had no effect upon the minds of Men, to make them really better, to cure them of their Moral Defects and Impurities, their Sins and Vices.*

But the Christian Institution doth perfectly supply this defect, by taking us off from those *Carnal* and *Eternal* Observances, and principally requiring that we *worship God in spirit and in truth*; by giving us such Laws as wholly tend to advance *real* and *substantial* goodness, purity and holiness of heart and life, such as mainly tend to reform the Minds and Manners of Men, and to make us like to that Holy and perfect Being whom we worship: and besides an external humble and reverent demeanour of our selves in the worship of God, (to which Natural Religion doth likewise direct;) Christianity hath only instituted the solemn *External Rites*, viz. *Baptism*, and

and the Lord's Supper; whereby we solemnly oblige our selves to the practice of all virtue and goodness, I say only these two, that by the multitude of external Observances, Christians might not be taken off from the minding of the real and substantial Duties of Religion. And therefore the Church of Rome have extremely abated and weakened the force of Christianity upon the Hearts and Lives of Men, by amusing them with External Rites, which they have multiplied to that excessive degree, as to make the Yoke of Christ really heavier than that of Moses, and the Christian Religion, a more external and carnal Commandment than that of the Law, and by this means have diverted and taken off the Minds of Men from the main design of Christianity, inasmuch that they are so employed and taken up with Matters of external Ceremony, that they have no leisure to think of being good Men, and to mind the great and substantial Duties and Virtues of the Christian Life; so that they have spoil'd the Christian Reli-

Vol. IV.  gion of one of its chief Excellencies and Perfections, I mean the *simplicity* of its *Worship*, which they have now encumbered with so many foolish and friivolous *Rites* and *Observances*, as do not only render it more burthensome, but less apt to make men *inwardly* and *substantially* good, than even *Judaism* it self. This is so true and so visible, that the wiser and better sort of them have complain'd of it for several Ages, and still do, as much as they dare for fear of the *Inquisition*, or some other censure.

Secondly, Another defect of the Law of *Moses* was, that it did not give encouragement enough to Repentance, by declaring and assuring to us any certain way and method for the expiation and forgiveness of Sin. This the Rites of all Religion aimed at, and pretended to; but were very ineffectual to that end. The Heathen Sacrifices, and all the cruel and barbarous Rites belonging to them, did all pretend to be so many ways of appeasing the offended Deity, and of making atonement and expiation for Sin; and the Sacrifices

ces of the Jews were Instituted by God Ser. 4.
himself, to make an *external* and *legal*
expiation, and to be Types and Sha-
dows of a *better* and *more perfect* Sacri-
fice, which should really expiate Sin;
but even this was very darkly and im-
perfectly discovered to them; besides,
that the expiations of the Law did only
extend to the least sorts of Sins, those
of *ignorance* and *inadvertency*, but not
at all to *presumptuous* Sins, and such as
were committed with a *high hand*, not
to *wilful* and *deliberate* Sins, except in
some very few and rare Cases particu-
larly mentioned in the Law; so that
tho' a great part of the Religious Rites
both of the Pagan and *Jewish* Religi-
on, aimed at the expiation of Sin, yet
were they really ineffectual to that
end; and upon the whole matter,
Mankind, tho' they conceived good
hope of God's mercy and forgiveness in
case of Repentance (*Who can tell if God
will turn and repent, and turn away from
his anger?*) yet they were unacquainted
with any certain and effectual means
to that purpose,

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It remains then, that this great blessing of the Forgiveness of Sins, was never sufficiently declared and assured to Mankind, but through Jesus Christ in the Gospel. So St. Paul expressly asserts, *Acts 13. 38, 39. Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of Sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.* The Gospel hath provided an expiation from all Sins in general, and that by a Sacrifice of inestimable value, *the blood of the Son of God.* And this is a mighty encouragement to Repentance, and one most effectual means to reclaim Men from their Sins, to be assured that they are indemnified for what is past. And this the Apostle means, when he says, *Gal. 3. 13. that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; that is, whereas the Law left Sinners, as to those Sins which stood most in need of pardon, under a Curse, having provided no expiation for them, Christ hath redeemed them from that Curse,*

Curse, by making a general expiation for Sin; and in this sense it is that the Author to the *Hebrews* says, *Ch. 9. 15.* that Christ died for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Covenant; that is, for those Sins for which the Covenant of the Law had provided no way of forgiveness; and therefore St. *Johu* says emphatically, *1 Joh. 1. 7.* that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.

Thirdly, The Law did not afford sufficiently plain and certain Rules and Directions for a good Life. As the corruption and degeneracy of Mankind grew worse, so the light of Nature waxed dimmer and dimmer, and the Rule of Good and Evil was more doubtful and uncertain, and that in very considerable instances of our Duty. The Law of *Moses* was peculiar to the Jews: and even to them, who only had the benefit and advantage of it, it did not give clear and perfect light and direction as to *Moral* Duties, and those things which are of an *Eternal* and *Immutable* Reason and Goodness. And therefore our Saviour in

Vol.IV. in this Sermon explains it to a greater perfection than it was understood to have among the *Jews*, or the letter of it seemed to intend, and hath not only forbidden several things permitted by that Law, as *Divorce*, and *Retaliation of Injuries*; but hath heighthned our Duty in several instances of it, requiring us to *love our Enemies*, and to *forgive the greatest injuries and provocations*, tho' never so often repeated, and not only not to *revenge them*, but to *requite them with good turns*, which were not understood by Mankind to be Laws before, but yet when duly consider'd, are very agreeable to right Reason, and the sense of the wisest and best Men. So that the Christian Religion hath not only fixt and determined our Duty, and brought it to a greater certainty, but hath raised it to a greater perfection, and rendered it every way fit to bring the Minds of Men to a more Divine temper, and a more reasonable and perfect way of serving God, than ever the World was instructed in before.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Promises and Threatnings of the Law were only of *temporal* good and evil things, which are, in comparison of the *endless* Rewards and Punishments of *another World*, but very languid and faint Motives to obedience. Not but that the *Jews* under the Law, had such apprehensions of their own Immortality, and of a future state of Happiness and Misery after this Life, as Natural Light suggested to them; which was in most but a wavering and uncertain persuasion, and consequently of small efficacy to engage Men to their Duty; but the Law of *Moses* added little or nothing to the clearness of those Natural Notions concerning a future state, and the strengthening of this persuasion in the Minds of Men; it did rather suppose it, than give any new force and life to it. And for this Reason more particularly the Apostle tells us that *the Law was* but weak to make Men good; because it did not work strongly enough upon the hopes and fears of Men, by the weight of its Promises, and the terrour of its Threatnings;

Vol. IV. Threatnings; and that for this weakness and ~~imperfection~~ of it, it was removed, and a more powerful and awakening dispensation brought in the place of it; Heb. 7. 18, 19. For there is verily a disannulling of the Commandment that was before (that is, of the Jewish Law) for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; for the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; that is, the Covenant of the Gospel, which promiseth Eternal Life. And Ch. 8. 6. for this Reason more especially the Apostle says, that Christ had obtained a more excellent Ministry, being the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises. And Rom. 1. 16, 18. St. Paul tells us, that for this Reason the Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation, because therein the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men. The clear Revelation of a Future Judgement, was that which made the Gospel so proper and so powerful an Instrument for the Salvation of Men. The great impiety of Mankind, and their impenitency in it, was not so much to be wondered at before,

fore, while the World was in a great measure ignorant of the infinite danger of a wicked Life; and therefore God is said in some sort to overlook it; but now he commands all Men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in righteousness by that Man, whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, Act. 17. 30, 31. The clear discovery and perfect assurance of a future judgment, calls loudly upon all Men to leave their Sins, and turn to God.

Fifthly, The Covenant of the Law had no spiritual Promises contained in it, of the grace and assistance of God's Holy Spirit, for the mortifying of Sin, and enabling Men to their Duty, and supporting them under Sufferings; but the Gospel is full of clear and express Promises to this purpose. Our Saviour hath assured us, that God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luk. 11. 13. and this the Apostle tells us is actually confer'd upon all true Christians, those who do sincerely embrace
and

Vol. IV. and believe the Gospel. Rom. 8. 9. *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Hence the Gospel is call'd by the same Apostle *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*, v. 2d. of that Chap. *The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and Death*; and in the next words he tells us, that herein manifestly appeared the weakness of the Law, that it left Men destitute of this mighty help and advantage (at least as to any special promise of it) *What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by making him a Sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*; that is, that that Righteousness which the Law aimed at and signified, but was too weak to effect, might be really accomplisht in us, *who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*; that is, who are acted and assisted by a higher and better Principle than Men either have in Nature, or the carnal dispensation of the Law did,
 endow



endow Men withall. And because of this great defect, the Law is said to be a state of *Bondage* and *Servitude*; and on the contrary, the Gospel, by Reason of this mighty advantage, is call'd a state of *Adoption* and *Liberty*, ver. 15. *for ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage, but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father*; and 2 Cor. 3. 17. *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*. And to this very thing St. Paul appeals, as that whereby Men might judge whether the Law or the Gospel were the more excellent and powerful Dispensation, Gal. 3. 2. *This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith*? As if he had said, let this one thing determine that whole Matter; were ye made Partakers of this great Priviledge and Blessing of the Spirit, while ye were of the Jewish Religion, or since ye became Christians? And ver. 14. he calls it *the blessing of Abraham*; that is, the blessing promised to all Nations by *Abraham's Seed*, namely, *the Messias*; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,

K

that

Vol. IV. *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through Faith.*

And then for the supporting us under afflictions, the Gospel promiseth an extraordinary assistance of God's holy Spirit to us, 1 Pet. 4. 14. *if ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you.*

But were there no good Men under the dispensation of the Law? Yes certainly there were, and they were so by the grace and assistance of God's Holy Spirit: but then this was an effect of the Divine goodness; but not of any *special Promise*, contained in that Covenant, of Divine grace and assistance to be conferred on all those that were admitted into it. But thus it is in the New Covenant of the Gospel; and therefore the Law is call'd *a dead letter, the oldness of the letter, and the ministration of the letter*, in opposition to the Gospel, which is call'd the *Ministration of the Spirit*. And this the Apostle lays special weight upon, as a main difference between these two Covenants,

venants, that the first gave an external Law, but the new Covenant offers inward grace and assistance to enable Men to Obedience, and hath an inward and powerful efficacy upon the Minds of Men, accompanying the Ministration of it, *Heb. 8. 7, 8, 9, 10.* For if that first Covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the Covenant which I made with their Fathers, &c. For this is the Covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my Laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts.

And of this inward Grace and assistance we are further secured, by the powerful and prevalent and perpetual intercession of our High-Priest for Sinners, at the right hand of God; not like the intercession of the Priests under the Law, who being Sinners themselves, were less fit to intercede for

Vol. IV. *others; but we have an High-Priest that is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners, who by the Eternal Spirit offer'd himself without spot to God, to purchase for us those Blessings which he intercedes for. The Priests under the Law were Intercessors upon Earth; but Christ is entred into Heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24. The Priests under the Law were removed from this Office by Death; but Christ, because he continues for ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood, and is an everlasting Advocate and Intercessor for us, in the virtue of his most meritorious Sacrifice continually presented to his Father, where he is always at the right hand of God, to present our Prayers to him, and to obtain pardon of our Sins, and grace to help in time of need, and by his intercession in Heaven, to procure all those Blessings to be actually confer'd upon us, which he purchased for us by his blood upon Earth; wherefore he is able to save to the utmost all those that come to God by him, seeing*

but perfect the Law of Moses.

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seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, as the same Apostle speaks, Heb. 7. 25.

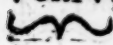
Ser. 4.

And thus I have as briefly as well I could shewed, how the Christian Religion doth supply all the weaknesses and defects and imperfections of the Jewish Religion; and consequently, does in no wise *contradict* or *interfere* with the great Design of *the Law and the Prophets*, but hath *perfected* and *made up* whatever was weak or wanting in that Institution to make Men truly good, or, as the Expression is in the Prophet *Daniel*, *to bring in everlasting Righteousness*; that is, to *clear* and *confirm* those Laws of Holiness and Righteousness, which are of *indispensable* and *eternal* obligation.

And if this be the great Design of our Saviour's coming, and the Christian Doctrine be every way fitted to advance Righteousness and true Holiness, and to make us as excellently good as this imperfect state of Mortality will admit, since it hath many advantages incomparably be-

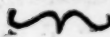
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yond

Vol. IV.  yond any Religion or Institution that ever was in the World, both in respect of the perfection of its Laws, and the force of its Motives and Arguments to Repentance, and a Holy Life, and in respect of the Encouragements which it gives, and the Examples which it sets before us, and the powerful assistance which it offers to us, to enable us *to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God*; What a shame is this to us, who are under the power of this excellent Institution, if the temper of our Minds, and the tenour of our Conversation be not in some measure answerable to the Gospel of Christ! The greater helps and advantages we have of being good, the greater things may justly be expected from us; for *to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.*

Christianity is *the fulfilling of the Righteousness of the Law, by walking not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, by mortifying the deeds of the Flesh, and by bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit,*
which

which are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Fidelity, Meekness, and Temperance. The Righteousness of Faith doth not consist in a barren and ineffectual belief of the Gospel, in a meer embracing of the Promises of it, and relying upon Christ for Salvation, in a Faith without works, which is dead; but in a Faith which worketh by Love, in becoming new Creatures, and in keeping the Commandments of God. The Righteousness of Faith speaketh on this wise. This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment, 1 John 3. 23. and this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also, 1 John 4. 21. That we approve the things that are excellent, being filled with the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and the praise of God, Phil. 1. 10, 11. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if

Vol. IV. *there be any virtue, if there be any*
 *praise, mind these things, Ch. 4. 8.*

And then considering what abundant provision the Gospel hath made for our attainment of Everlasting Salvation, we are altogether without excuse, if we perish. Since God *hath raised up so mighty a Salvation for us; how shall we escape?* If we *die in our Sins*, it is not because God would not forgive them, but because we would not Repent and be Saved; the fault is all our own, and we owe it wholly to our selves, if we be lost and undone for ever. If when *Life and Death*, Heaven and Hell, are so plainly *set before us*, Eternal Misery and Perdition fall to our Lot and Portion, it is not because we were not warned of our Danger, or because Happiness and *the things of our Peace were hid from our eyes*, but because we have made Death and Destruction our obstinate and final Choice.

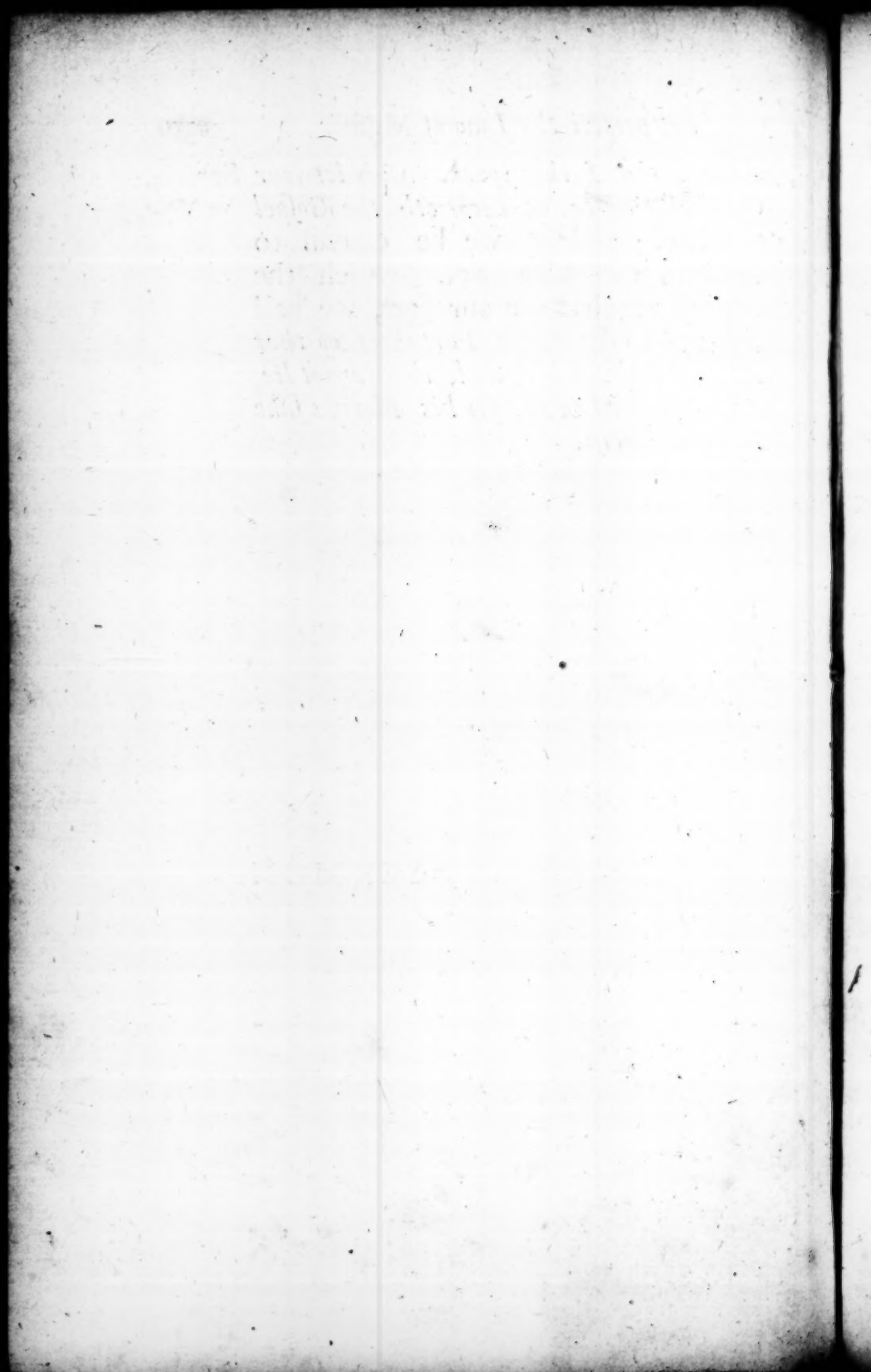
But, Beloved, I hope better things of you, and things which accompany Salvation,

but perfect the Law of Moses.

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*vation, tho' I thus speak. Only let your Ser. 4.
Conversation be as becometh the Gospel* ~~~~~
*of Christ; and if we be careful to
perform the Conditions which the
Gospel requires on our part, we shall
not fail to be made Partakers of that
Eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie,
hath promised to us, for his Mercy's sake
in Jesus Christ.*

SERMON



SERMON V.

Of the Nature of Regeneration,
and its Necessity, in order to
Justification, and Salvation.


GALAT. VI. 15.

*For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision
availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision;
but a new Creature.*

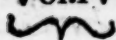
THERE are two Epistles of
St. Paul, namely, that to the
Romans, and this to the Gala-
tians, which are principally and par-
ticularly design'd to confute a false
persuasion, which had prevailed a-
mongst many Christians, especially
those who were Converted from Ju-
daism; *that it was not enough for Men
to embrace and confess the Christian Re-
ligion,*

Vol. IV. *ligion, unless they kept the Law of Moses, or at least submitted to that great Precept, of Circumcision; the neglect whereof among all the affirmative Precepts of the Law, was only threatned with excision, or being cut off from among the People. And of the prevalency of this Errour, and the great disturbance which it made in the Christian Church, we have a particular account, Acts 15. where a General Council of the Apostles is call'd, and a Letter written in their Names to all the Christian Churches, to rectifie their apprehensions in this matter, ver. 24. of that Chap. For as much as we have heard, that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your Souls, saying ye must be Circumcis'd, and keep the Law, to whom we gave no such Commandment, &c.*

And upon this occasion likewise it was, that St. Paul wrote this Epistle to the Galatians, as likewise that to the Romans; in the former of which, after he had at large confuted this Errour, (which he calls *the preaching of another Gospel, than what the Apostles had preached, and the Christians first received*) In the

the beginning of the 5th Chapt. he Ser. 5.
 Exhorts them to assert the Liberty, 
 which Christ had purchas'd for them,
 from the obligation of the Law of
Moses, ver. 1, 2. Stand fast therefore in
the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us
free, and be not entangled again with the
yoak of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto
you, that if ye be Circumcised, Christ
shall profit you nothing; Not that
 hereby he condemneth Circumcision,
 as a thing evil in it self; for God ne-
 ver Instituted or Commanded any
 thing that was so; but he opposeth
 the opinion of the necessity of it to
 our Justification and Salvation, when
 the Gospel had so plainly taken away
 the obligation and use of it; and con-
 sequently to affirm still the necessity
 of it, was really to renounce Christi-
 anity. For if Judaism was still the
 way to Salvation, Christianity was to
 no purpose; and if Christianity be
 now the way, then the obligation to
 the Jewish Religion was ceased. To
 avoid the force of this Reasoning, it
 was not enough for the false Apostles
 to say (as it seems they did) that
 Christians were not obliged univer-
 sally

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fally to the whole Law of *Moses*, but principally to the Law of Circumcision; because Circumcision being the sign and badge of that Covenant, whoever took that upon him, did thereby own his obligation to the whole Law, ver. 3, 4. *For I testifie again to every Man that is Circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law; Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace; that is, whoever of you expect and profess to be justified by the Law, of Moses, ye take away the necessity and use of the Christian Religion; and are fallen from grace; that is, do in effect renounce the Gospel; for we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of Righteousness by Faith, ver. 5. we by the Spirit, in opposition to Circumcision, which was in the Flesh, do expect to be justified by the belief of the Gospel. For in Jesus Christ, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, ver. 6. that is, now under the dispensation of the Gospel by Christ Jesus, it signifies nothing to a Man's Justification or Salvation, whether he be Circumcised, or not. Circumcised,*

cumcised, whether he be a Jew or a Gentile. All that the Gospel requires as necessary to these purposes, is, that we perform the Conditions of the Gospel, that so we may be capable of being made Partakers of the blessings of it.

Ser. 5.

Now as the great blessing and benefit of the Gospel is variously exprest, as by *the forgiveness of our sins*, by *our acceptance with God*, or (which comprehends both,) by *our Justification*, sometimes by *Adoption*, and *our being made the Sons and Children of God*, sometimes by *Redemption*, and (which is the consummation of all,) by *Salvation and Eternal Life*; I say, as the blessing and benefit of the Gospel, is in Scripture exprest to us by these several terms, which do in effect, all signify the same thing; so our Duty, and the Condition the Gospel requires on our part, is likewise as variously exprest, sometimes, and that very frequently, by the word *Faith*, as being the great Source and Principle of all Religious Acts and Performances; but then this *Faith* must not be a bare as-
sent

Vol. IV. sent and perswasion of the Truth of the Gospel, but such an effectual belief, as expresseth it self in fuitable acts of Obedience and Holiness, such as the Apostle here calls *πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐργασμένη*, a Faith which worketh by Love, a Faith that is inspir'd and acted, or rather consummate and made perfect by Charity, (for so the word doth often signifie,) and then this Phrase will be just of the same importance with that of St. James, Chap. 2. 22. *by Works is Faith made perfect*. Sometimes, and that also very frequently, the Condition of the Gospel is exprest by words which import and signifie the change of our State, as by *Repentance, Conversion, Regeneration, Renovation, Sanctification, the New Creature, and the New Man*, which expressions are all so well known, that I need not refer to particular Texts; sometimes the condition of the Gospel is exprest by the visible and sensible effects of this inward change in our outward Life and Actions; as namely by *Obedience, and keeping the Commandments of God*. So *Heb. 5. 9.* Christ is said to be *the Author of Eternal Salvation to them that*

that obey him; where Obedience is plainly put for the whole condition of the Gospel, the performance whereof entitles us to Eternal Life and Happiness. Ser. 5.

Now that by these various expressions, one and the same thing is certainly intended and meant, viz. The Condition of the Gospel; that which is requir'd on our part, in order to our full and perfect justification and acceptance with God, is evident beyond all denial; by comparing the three different ways whereby St. Paul doth express the same Proposition for sense and substance; in which he tells us, what it is that will avail to our Justification under the Gospel, that is, according to the terms of the Christian Religion; that it is neither here nor there, that it signifies nothing whether a Man be Circumcised or not, but that we be so qualified as the Gospel requires, that the Conditions upon which the Blessings of the Gospel are promised be found in us. And there are three Texts wherein the same thing is plainly intended in three very different expressions. Gal. 5. 6. In Jesus Christ neither Circum-

L cision

Vol. IV. *cision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but Faith, which is consummate, or made perfect by Charity. Gal. 6. 15. For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but a new Creature. 1 Cor. 7. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing: but the keeping of the Commandments of God. It is evident, that in these three Texts the Apostle designs to say the same thing, and consequently that Faith which is made perfect by Charity, and the new Creature, and keeping of the Commandments of God, are the same in sense and substance, viz. the Condition of our Justification and acceptance with God under the Covenant of the Gospel, or in the Christian Religion.*

I shall at present, by God's assistance, handle the second of these Texts. *In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but a new Creature.* And here the Condition of the Gospel is exprest to us, by the change of our State, which in Scripture is call'd our *Regeneration*, or becoming *new Creatures, and new Men.* Circumcision was
but

but an outward sign and mark upon the Body, and the Flesh, though it did indeed prefigure and typifie the inward Circumcision of the heart, the giving of Men *new Hearts*, and *new Spirits*, under the more perfect dispensation of the Gospel: but now in *Christ Jesus*, that is, in the Christian Religion, the presence or the want of this outward mark will avail nothing to our justification; but that which was signified by it, the renovation of our Hearts and Spirits, our becoming *new Creatures*, is now the Condition of our justification and acceptance with God.

The false Apostles indeed did lay great stress upon the business of Circumcision, not so much out of zeal to the Law of *Moses*, as to void Persecution, *ver. 12. They constrain you to be Circumcised, only lest they should suffer Persecution for the Cross of Christ.* For at that time, though the Christians were Persecuted, yet the Jews by the *Roman Edicts* had the free exercise of their Religion, and therefore they gloried in this external mark of Circumcision, because it exempted them from

Vol. IV. suffering; but St. Paul gloried in his sufferings for Christ, and the marks of that upon his Body; ver. 14. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and ver. 17. I bear in my Body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He tells them, what necessities soever they might pretend of Circumcision, either for their Justification, or Salvation, the true ground of all was to save themselves from Temporal Sufferings; and that in the Christian Religion it signified nothing to recommend them to the favour of God, whether they were Circumcised or not; nothing would be available to this purpose, but the renovation and change of their Hearts and Lives. *For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision: but a new Creature, $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \nu\epsilon\omega\ \kappa\tau\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$, a new Creation*, to intimate the greatness of the Change, which Christianity, throughly entertained, made in Men.

Having thus cleared the occasion and meaning of these words, I come now to consider the Particulars contained in them, namely, these two things.

First,

First, That the Gospel hath taken away the Obligation of the Law of Moses; in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision.

Secondly, That according to the terms of the Christian Religion, nothing will avail to our justification and acceptance with God, but the real renovation of our Hearts and Lives; neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision: but a new Creature.

1. That the Gospel hath taken away the obligation of the Law of Moses. In Christ Jesus, that is, now under the dispensation of the Gospel, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision. There was never any general Obligation upon Mankind to this Rite of Circumcision, but only upon the Seed of Abraham; but yet upon the preaching of the Gospel, many of the Jewish Christians would have brought the Gentiles under this yolk; pretending that Christianity was but a superstructure upon the Law of

Vol. IV.


Moses, which together with the Gospel, was to be the Religion of the whole World; and there was some colour for this, because our Saviour himself submitted to this Rite, and was Circumcised; which the Apostle takes notice of in the 4th Chap. of this Epist. ver. 4. *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, that is, Circumcised.* And 'tis true indeed, that our blessed Saviour was Circumcised, but not to signify to us the perpetuity of Circumcision, and the continuance of it under the Christian Religion, but for a quite different end; as a testimony of his Obedience to that Law, which tho' afterwards it was to expire, yet was to be obeyed whilst it was in force, by all that were born under it; he was made under the Law, and it became him, who came to teach Mankind Obedience to the Laws of God, to fulfil all Righteousness himself. And therefore the Apostle in this Epistle, where he takes notice of this, that Christ was made under the Law, gives this Reason of it, that he might be the fitter to free those who were

were under it, from the servitude of *Ser. 5.*
it; he was *made under the Law*, that he
might redeem them that were under the
Law; and that those who were in the
condition of Servants before, might
be set at liberty, and receive the adop-
tion of Sons.

But how did his being *made under the Law*, qualifie him to redeem those who were under the Law? Thus; By submitting to it himself, he shewed that he owned the Authority of it, and that he had no malice or enmity against it; or as he himself expresses it, that *he came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it.* And being *fulfill'd*, and having serv'd the time and end for which God intended it, it expir'd of it self; like a Law which is not made for perpetuity, but limited to a certain period. And our Blessed Saviour, who came with greater Authority than *Moses*, and gave greater Testimony of his Divine Authority, had sufficient power to declare the expiration of it; and by Commissioning his Disciples before and after his death to Preach the Gospel to the whole World, he

Vol. IV. put an end to that *particular Law and Dispensation*, which only concern'd the *Jewish Nation*, by giving a *general Law* to all *Mankind*.

So that from the Death of our Saviour, and his Ascension into Heaven, upon which followed the general publication of the Gospel, the Law of *Moses* ceased, and according to our Saviour's express appointment, Proselytes were to be admitted into the Christian Church only by *Baptism*, and not by *Circumcision*. And if *Circumcision*, which was the sign of that Covenant, was laid aside, then the whole Obligation of that Law and Covenant which God had made with the Jews, was also ceased. It was once indeed the mark of God's chosen and peculiar People; but now that God hath revealed himself to the whole World by his Son, and offers Salvation to all Mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, the *wall of separation is broken down*, and *Circumcision*, which was the mark of distinction between Jews and Gentiles, is taken away; and therefore he is said to have made peace by his Cross, and to have

have blotted out, and taken away the handwriting of Ordinances, nailing it to his Cross; that is, from the time of his Death to have taken away the obligation of the Law of *Moses*, tho' it was a good while after, before the Jews were wholly weaned from the veneration and use of it. Ser. 5.

Nay, it was some time before the Apostles were clearly convinc'd, that the Gospel was to be preach'd to the Gentiles; this being one of those Truths, which our Saviour promised after his departure, his Spirit should lead them into the perfect knowledge of; and then they were fully instructed, that the Law of *Moses* was expir'd and that it was no longer necessary to the Salvation of Men, that they should be Circumcised, and keep that Law. And tho' it was once enjoyn'd by God himself to the Jews, and their Obedience to it was necessary to their acceptance with God, yet now by Christ Jesus, God had offered Salvation to Men upon other Terms; and whether they were Circumcised, or not, was of no moment to their Justification or Salvation.

Vol. IV. Salvation one way or other ; but provided they perform'd the Condition of this New Covenant of the Gospel, they were all alike capable of the Divine Favour and Acceptance.

But I proceed to that, which I mainly intend to prosecute from these words; and that is the

Second Particular in the Text, namely, that according to the terms of the Gospel, and the Christian Religion, nothing will avail to our justification and acceptance with God, but the real renovation of our Hearts and Lives; neither Circumcision, nor uncircumcision: but a new Creature. For the full explanation of this, I shall do these *three Things.*

First, Shew what is imply'd in this Phrase of a *new Creature.*

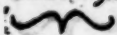
Secondly, That this is the great Condition of our justification and acceptance with God, and that it is the same in substance with *Faith perfected by Charity,*

Charity, and with keeping the Commandments of God. Ser. 5.

Thirdly, That it is very reasonable it should be so.

I. What is imply'd in this Phrase of a *new Creature*. It is plain at first sight, that it is a Metaphorical expression of that great and thorough change which is made in Men by the Gospel, or the Christian Religion. The Scripture sets forth to us this Change by great variety of expressions, by *Conversion*, and *turning from our Iniquities unto God*; by *Repentance*, (which signifies a *change of our Mind and Resolution*, and is in Scripture call'd *Repentance from dead works*, and *Repentance unto Life*;) by *Regeneration*, or *being born again*; by *Resurrection from the Dead*, and *rising to newness of Life*; by *Sanctification*, and *being wash'd and cleans'd from all filthiness and impurity*, (which three last Metaphors are imply'd in *Baptism*, which is call'd *Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. *According to his Mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*;

Vol. IV. Ghost; and our being born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, John 3. 3. Except a Man be born again, &c. and ver. 5. except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; and the purifying of our Consciences, Heb. 10. 22. having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies wash'd with pure water; and the answer of a good Conscience towards God, 1 Pet. 3. 21. Baptism doth now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience towards God; and finally, our being Baptiz'd into the Death and Resurrection of Christ, Rom. 6. 3, 4. Knowye not that so many of us as were Baptized into Jesus Christ, were Baptized into his death; therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life.) And lastly, this Change is set forth to us by Renovation, and our being made New Creatures, and new Men, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Therefore if any Man be in Christ, that is, professeth himself a Christian, he is a new Creature; old things are past away,

away, behold all things are become new. Ser. 5.
And so likewise, *Ephes. 4. 22, 23, 24.*  this great Change is exprest by putting off concerning the former Conversation, the old Man, which is corrupt according to the lusts of deceit, and being renewed in the spirit of our Minds, and putting on that new Man, which after God is Created in righteousness, and true Holiness. The Expression is very emphatical, renewed in the spirit of our Minds, that is, in our very Minds and Spirits, to signifie to us that it is a most inward and thorough Change, reaching to the very center of our Souls and Spirits. And, *Colos. 3. 9, 10, 11th verses*, it is represented much after the same manner, *Seeing ye have put off the old Man with his deeds, and have put on the new Man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that Created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all.* Which is the same with what the Apostle says here in the Text, that in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision: but a new Creature;


Vol. IV. *Creature*; that is, these external Marks and Differences signifie nothing: but this inward Change, *the new Creature, Christ formed in us*, this in the Christian Religion is *all in all*.

But that we may the more clearly understand the just importance of this Metaphor of *a new Creature*, or *a new Creation*, I shall,

First, Consider what it doth certainly signifie, by comparing this Metaphorical Phrase with other plain Texts of Scripture.

And *Secondly*, That it doth not import what some would extend it to, so as to found Doctrines of great Consequence upon the single strength of this, and the like Metaphors in Scripture, without any manner of countenance from plain Texts.

First, I shall consider what this Metaphor doth certainly import, so as to be undeniably evident from other more

more clear and full Texts of Scripture, Ser. 5.
namely, these *two* Things. 

1. The greatness of this Change.

2. That it is effectual and wrought
by a Divine Power.

1. The greatness of this Change;
it is called *καινὴ κτίσις* a new Creation;
as if the Christian Doctrine, firmly
entertained and believed, did as it
were mould and fashion Men over
again, transforming them into a quite
other sort of Persons than what they
were before, and made such a change
in them, as the Creating Power of
God did, in bringing this Beautiful
and orderly frame of things out of
their dark and rude *Chaos*. Thus the
Apostle represents it, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *God
who commanded the light to shine out of
darkness, (alluding to the first Crea-
tion) hath shined into our hearts, to
give the light of the knowledge of the
glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
We are translated from one extream to
another, Acts 26. 18. When our Lord
sends Paul to preach the Gospel to the
Gentiles,

Vol.IV. Gentiles, he tells him what a change it would make in them, by *opening their eyes, and turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* And St. Peter expresses the change which Christianity makes in Men, by their being *call'd out of darkness into a marvellous light,* 1 Pet. 2. 9. And so St. Paul. *Eph. 5. 8. Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.*

And indeed, wherever the Doctrine of Christ hath its full effect, and perfect work, it makes a mighty change both in their inward Principles, and outward Practice; it darts a new light into their Minds, so that they see things otherwise than they did before, and form a different judgment of things from what they did before; it endues them with a new Principle, and new Resolutions, gives them another Spirit, and another Temper, a quite different sense and gust of things from what they formerly had. And this inward change of their Minds necessarily produceth a proportionable change in their Lives and Conversations,

tions, so that the Man steers quite another course, acts after another rate, and drives on quite other designs from what he did before. Ser. 5.
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And this is remarkably seen in those who are reclaimed from Impiety and Prophaneness to Religion, and from a vicious to a virtuous course of Life. The Change is great and real in all; but not so sensible and visible in some, as others; in those who are made good by the insensible steps of a pious and virtuous Education; as in those who are translated out of a quite contrary state, and *turn'd from the power of Satan unto God, and translated out of the Kingdom of Darkeness, into the Kingdom of Christ*; which was the case of the Heathen World, in their first Conversion to Christianity.

Secondly, This Change is effected and wrought by a Divine Power, of the same kind with that, which Created the World, and raised up Christ Jesus from the Dead; two great and glorious Instances of the Divine Pow-

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er;

Vol. IV. er; and to these the Scripture frequently alludes, when it speaks of this *New Creation*. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts. Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also are raised to newness of life, saith St. Paul, Rom. 6. 4. And to the same purpose the same Apostle speaks, Ephes. 1. 19, 20. And that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the operation of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. So that our *Renovation*, and being made *new Creatures*, is an instance of the same glorious Power, which exerted it self in the first Creation of things, and in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Dead; but not altogether after the same manner, as I shall shew under the next Head.

I should now in the second place proceed to shew, that this Metaphor of a new Creation doth not import what some Men would extend it to,

so as to found Doctrines of great consequence upon the single strength of this and other like Metaphors of Scripture, without any manner of countenance and confirmation from plain Texts. But this I reserve to another Discourse. Ser. 5.

M 2 SERMON

to as to found the ground of great con-
 sideration upon the single strength of
 this and other like Manifestations of Spirit
 and without any manner of count-
 rance and confirmation from plain
 Testimony. But this I refuse to and
 that I disallow.

M. A. SERMON

SERMON VI.

Of the Nature of Regeneration,
and its necessity, in order to
Justification and Salvation.

GALAT. VI. 15.

*For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision
availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision;
but a new Creature.*

IN these words are contained these
two Things.

First, That the Gospel hath taken
away the obligation of the Law, ha-
ving taken away the sign of that Co-
venant, which was *Circumcision*.

Secondly, That according to the
terms of the Gospel, and the Christian
M 3 Religion,

Vol. IV. Religion, nothing will avail to our justification and acceptance with God, but the real renovation of our Hearts and Lives. For the full explication of this, I propounded to do these *three* Things.

I. To shew what is imply'd in this Phrase of a *new Creature*.

II. That this is the great Condition of our justification and acceptance with God, and that it is the same in sense and substance with those other expressions, in the two parallel Texts of *Faith perfected by Charity*; and *keeping the Commandments of God*.

III. That it is very reasonable that this should be the Condition of our justification, and acceptance to the favour of God.

I began with the *first* of these, *viz.* To shew what is imply'd in this Phrase of a *new Creature*; as to which I shew'd,

First,

First, What this Metaphor doth certainly import, so as to be undeniably evident from other more clear and full Texts of Scripture; namely, the greatness of this Change; and that it is effected by a Divine Power. I now proceed;

Secondly, To shew that it doth not import what some would extend it to, and that so as to found Doctrines of great Consequence upon the meer and single strength of this and other like Metaphors of Scripture, without any manner of countenance and confirmation from plain Texts; such Doctrines as these *three*.

1. That as the Creation was by an *irresistible* act of the Divine Power, so is this *new Creation*, or Conversion of a Sinner.

2. That as Creatures were *meerly passive* in their being made, and contributed nothing at all to it; no more do we to our Conversion and Regeneration.

M 4

3. That



3. That as the Creation of the several Ranks and Kinds of Creatures was *in an instant*, and effected by the powerful word of God, only saying, *let such and such things be*, and immediately they were; so this *new Creation*, or the work of Regeneration is *in an instant*, and admits of no degrees.

Concerning these *three* Doctrines of great Moment and Consequence in Divinity, I shall shew, with all the clearness and brevity I can, that they are built solely upon Metaphors of Scripture, tortur'd and strain'd too far, without any real ground and foundation from Scripture or Reason; nay, contrary to the tenor of the one, and the dictates of the other; nay indeed contrary to the general experience of the operation of God's Grace upon the Minds of Men in their Conversion.

First, It is pretended, that as the Creation was by an *irresistible* act of the Divine Power, so is the *new Creation*,
or

or the Conversion of a Sinner; and this is solely argued from the Metaphorical expressions of Scripture concerning Conversion; such as being *called out of darkness into light*, alluding to that powerful word of God, which in the first Creation *commanded the light to shine out of darkness; being quicken'd and rais'd to a new Life*; and from this Metaphor here in the Text, of a *new Creation*.

Ser. 6.

But surely it is a dangerous thing in Divinity, to build Doctrines upon Metaphors, especially if we strain them to all the similitudes which a quick and lively imagination can find out; whereas some one obvious thing is commonly intended in the Metaphor, and the meaning is absolv'd and acquitted in that, and it is folly to pursue it into all those similitudes, which a good fancy may suggest. When our Saviour says, *that he will come as a Thief in the night*, it is plain what he means; that the Day of Judgment will surprize the careless World, when they least look for it, *that he will come at an hour when they are not aware*; and tho' he resem-
ble

Vol. IV. ble his coming to that of a *Thief in the night*, yet here is nothing of *Robbery* in the case. So here when the change which Christianity makes in Men, is called a *new Creation*, this only imports the greatness of the Change, which by the power of God's Grace is made upon the hearts and lives of Men; and the Metaphor is sufficiently absolv'd in this plain sense and meaning of it, agreeable to the literal expressions of Scripture concerning this thing, and there is no need that this Change should in all other respects answer the work of Creation; and consequently there is no necessity that it should be effected in an *irresistible* manner, or that we should be *altogether passive* in this Change, and that we should no ways concur to it by any act of our own, or that this work should be done *in an instant*, and admit of no steps and degrees.

It is not necessary that this Change should be effected in an *irresistible* manner. God may do so, when he pleaseth, without any injury to his Creatures; for it is certainly no wrong


to any Man to be made good and happy against his will; and I do not deny, but that God sometimes does so. The Call of the Disciples to follow Christ seems to have been a very sudden and forcible impression upon their Minds, without any appearing reason for it; for it is not reasonable for any Man to leave his Calling, and follow every one that bids him do so. The Conversion of *Saul* from a Persecutor of Christianity, to a Zealous Preacher of it, was certainly effected, if not in an *irresistible*, yet in a very *forcible* and *violent* manner. The Conversion of three thousand at one Sermon, when the Holy Ghost descended in a visible manner upon the Apostles, was certainly the effect of a mighty and *over-powering* degree of God's Grace. And the like may be said of the sudden Conversion of so many Persons from Heathenism, and great wickedness and impiety of Life, to the sincere profession of Christianity, by the preaching of the Apostles afterwards.

But

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But that this is not of absolute necessity, nor the ordinary method of God's Grace, to work upon the minds of Men in so *over-powering*, much less in an *irresistible* manner, is as plain as any thing of that Nature can be, both from Experience, and the Reason of the thing, and the constant tenour of the Scripture. We find that many (perhaps the greatest part) of those that are good are made so by the insensible steps and degrees of a Religious Education, and having been never vicious, can give no great account of any sensible Change, only that when they came to years of understanding, they consider'd things more, and the Principles that were instill'd into them in their younger years, did put forth themselves more vigorously at that time, as Seeds sprout out of the Ground, after they have a good while been buried, and lain hid in the Earth.

And it is contrary to Reason, to make an *irresistible* act of Divine Power necessary to our Repentance, and Conver-

Conversion; because this necessarily Ser. 6.
involves in it *two* things which seem 
very unreasonable.

First, That no Man Repents upon Consideration and Choice, but upon meer force and violent necessity, which quite takes away the Virtue of Repentance, whatever virtue there may be in the consequent acts of a Regenerate State.

Secondly, It implies that the Conversion and Repentance of those, upon whom God doth not work *irresistibly* is impossible, which is the utmost can be said to excuse the impenitency of Men, by taking it off from their own choice, and laying it upon the impossibility of the thing, and an utter disability in them to choose and do otherwise.

And it is likewise contrary to the constant tenour of the Bible, which supposeth that Men do very frequently resist the Grace and Holy Spirit of God. It is said of the Pharisees by our Saviour, *Luke 7. 30.* that *they rejected*

Vol. IV. *rejected the Council of God against themselves*; that is, the merciful Design of God for their Salvation. And of the Jews, *Acts 7. 51. that they always resisted the Holy Ghost.* So that some operations of God's Grace and Holy Spirit are *resistible*, and such, as if Men did not resist them, would be effectual to bring them to Faith and Repentance, else why are the Pharisees said to *reject the Council of God against themselves*, that is, to their own ruine; implying, that if they had not rejected it, they might have been saved; and if they had, it had been without *irresistible* Grace; for that which was offered to them, was actually *resisted* by them. Other Texts plainly shew, that the Reason of Mens impenitency and unbelief is not any thing wanting on God's part, but on theirs; as those known Texts, where in our Saviour laments the Case of *Jerusalem*, because they obstinately brought destruction upon themselves. *Luke 19. 42. If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace*: intimating that they might have known them, so as to have prevented that

that desolation which was coming Ser. 6.
 upon them, and was a forerunner of
 their Eternal Ruine; *but now they are*
hid from thine eyes; intimating, that
 then God gave them up to their own
 blindness and obstinacy; but the time
 was, when they might have *known the*
things of their peace; which cannot be
 upon the supposition of the necessity of
 an *irresistible* act of God's Grace to
 their Conversion, and Repentance;
 because then without that they could
 not have Repented, and if that had
 been afforded to them, they had infal-
 libly Repented. So likewise in that
 other Text, *Matth. 23. 37. Oh! Jerusa-*
lem, Jerusalem, how often would I have ga-
thered thee, even as an Hen gathereth her
Chickens under her wings, and you would not.
 And in *John 5. 40. Ye will not come un-*
to me that ye might have life. He would
 have gathered them, and they would not;
 he would have given them life, but
 they would not come to him. Are these
 serious and compassionate expostulati-
 ons and declarations of our Saviour's
 gracious intention towards them, any
 ways consistent with an impossibility

themselves and have been intended to nothing of
 purpose

Vol. IV. of their Repentance? which yet must be said, if *irresistible* Grace be necessary thereto; for then Repentance is impossible without it, and that it was not afforded to them is plain, because they did not Repent. The same may be said of that solemn declaration of God, *Ezek. 33. 11. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* Can it be said that God hath *no pleasure in the death of Sinners*, and yet be true, that he denies to the greatest part of them, that Grace which is necessary to their Repentance? Upon this Supposition, how can it be true, that *if the mighty works that were done in Chorazin, and Bethsaida, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have Repented, Matth. 11. 21.* since *irresistible* Grace did not accompany those Miracles? For if it had, *Chorazin and Bethsaida had Repented*, and without it *Tyre and Sidon could not Repent.*

The same difficulty is in those Texts, wherein God is represented as expecting the Repentance and Conversion of Sinners; and our Saviour
wondering

wondering at their unbelief and hardness of heart, and upbraiding them with it, *Ser. 6.*
Isa. 5. 4. What could I have done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? Mark 6. 6. 'tis said our Saviour marvel'd at the unbelief of the Jews. And Chap. 16. 14. that he upbraided his Disciples with their unbelief and hardness of heart. But why should the Repentance of Sinners be expected, or their unbelief marvel'd at, or indeed be upbraided to them, by him who knew it impossible to them, without an irresistible power and grace, which he knew likewise was not afforded to them? Neither God nor Men have reason to wonder that any Man does not do that, which at the same time they certainly know he cannot do.

The bottom of all that is said to avoid this pressing difficulty, is this;
 "that this impotence and disability of
 "Sinners is their Sin, and therefore
 "cannot be pleaded in their excuse,
 "for their impenitency; but God may
 N "still

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“still justly require that of them,
 “which they had once a natural power
 “to do, but wilfully forfeited and lost
 “it; they had this power in *Adam*,
 “and forfeited it by his disobedience.
 To shew how slight this evasion is, I
 need not run into that Argument,
 how far we are guilty of the Sin of
 our first Parents. That by that first
 transgression and disobedience all
 Mankind suffers, and our Natures are
 extremely corrupted and depraved,
 cannot be denied; but the corruption
 of our Natures is a thing very dif-
 ferent from Personal guilt, strictly and
 properly so call'd. I will take the bu-
 siness much shorter, and granting that
 Mankind had in *Adam* a Natural power
 to have continued obedient to the
 Laws of God, yet since *by one Man Sin*
enter'd into the World, and *all are now*
Sinners, here is an obligation to *Re-*
pentance, as well as to *Obedience*, and
 Men shall be Condemned for their
Impenitency. I ask now, whether in
Adam we had a power to *Repent*?
 'Tis certain *Adam* had not this power,
 and therefore I cannot see how we
 could lose it, and forfeit it in him.

Adam

Adam indeed had a Natural Power Scr. 8
 not to have sinned, and so not to have
 needed Repentance; but no power to
 Repent in the state of Innocency, be-
 cause in that state Repentance was
 impossible, because there could be no
 occasion for it. He had it not after
 his Fall, because by that he forfeited
 all his power to that which is spiri-
 tually good. 'Tis said indeed he had
 it in Innocency, but forfeited it by his
 Fall; so that he had it, when there
 was no occasion or possibility of the
 exercise of it, and lost it when there
 was occasion for it: or if he did not
 lose it by his Fall, we have it still,
 and then there is no need of any su-
 pernatural, much less *irresistible* grace to
 Repentance; so that our impotency, as
 to the particular Duty of Repentance,
 cannot be charg'd upon us as our fault,
 not so much as upon the account of
 Original Sin.

But the want of this Power is the
 consequent and just punishment of
 our first Transgression. Be it so; but
 if this impotency still remain in all
 those to whom God doth not afford

Vol. IV. his *irresistible* Grace, how comes the
 Grace offer'd in the Gospel to aggravate the impenitency of Men, and encrease their Condemnation? For if it be no Remedy against this impotency, how comes it to inflame the guilt of Impenitency? Or how is it Grace to offer Mercy to those upon their Repentance, who are out of a possibility of Repenting; and yet to punish them more severely for their impenitency after this offer made to them, which they cannot accept without that Grace which God is resolved not to afford them? If this be the Case, the greatest favour had been to have had no such offer made to them, and it had been happier for Mankind, that *the grace of God had not appear'd to all Men*, but only to those who shall *irresistibly* be made partakers of the benefit of it.

Secondly, Another Doctrine grounded upon this Metaphor of a *new Creation*, is, that we are *meerly passive* in the work of Conversion, and Regeneration, and contribute nothing to it; that God does all, and we do nothing at all; and this follows from the former, especially

specially if we allow the Metaphor as far as it will carry us. For as the first Creation of things was by an *irresistible* act of Divine Power, so the things that were made, were only *passive* in their Creation; and as they could make no resistance, so neither could they contribute any thing to their being what they are. And this Doctrine is not only argued from the Metaphor of a *new Creation*, but from several other Metaphors used in Scripture to describe our Natural State; as namely, *darkness*, *blindness*, and our being *dead in trespasses and sins*; from whence it is inferr'd, that we contribute no more to our Renovation, than darkness doth to the introduction of light, than a blind Man can do to the recovery of his sight, or a dead Man to his own Resurrection; but are *wholly passive* in this work. And to countenance this Notion, they make great advantage of the Character which is given in Scripture of the most degenerate Heathen, taking it for granted, that their Condition is the true standard of a Natural and unregenerate State; and to this purpose

Vol. IV. they insist particularly upon that description of the gentile Idolaters, *Eph. 4. 18 & 19. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness; to work all uncleanness with greediness.* Which is indeed a description of Men in their Natural State, but not of all, but of such as by the worst sort of vicious practices of the grossest Idolatry, and most abominable lewdness, were degenerated to the utmost, so that their Condition seemed desperate, without a miraculous and an extraordinary Grace of God, which was probably afforded to many of these. In like manner they argue the common Condition of Mankind, from the description which is given of the wickedness of Men, before God brought the Flood upon them, *Gen. 6. 5. God saw that the wickedness of Man was great in the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* This they make the Character of all Men in their Natural State, whereas this is a descrip-

description of an extraordinary degeneracy of Men, signifying that the World was then extremely bad, and depraved to the highest degree; for God gives this as a Reason why he was resolved to drown the World, and to *destroy Man from the face of the Earth*, because *their wickedness was grown to so great an height*. But if this were a description of the Natural State of Mankind, this could be no particular Reason for bringing a Flood upon the World at that time, there being the same Reason for it, for fifteen hundred years before, and ever will be the same Reason to the end of the World, that is, that Men are naturally corrupt and depraved. Surely they consider the Scripture very superficially, that interpret it at this rate.

'Tis too true, that the Nature of Man is sadly corrupted and depraved; but not so bad as by vicious practices and habits it may be made; all Men are not equally at the same distance from the Grace of God; some are *nearer to the Kingdom of God* than others, and less force and violence will serve to

Vol. IV. *rescue them from the power of Satan, and to transplant them into the Kingdom of Christ. The prevalency and dominion of sin makes an unregenerate state, as the prevalency of Grace puts a Man into a Regenerate state. An unregenerate Man is not necessarily as bad as is possible, no more than it is necessary to a regenerate state, that a Man be perfectly good; so that it is a great mistake to argue the common Condition of all Mankind, from the descriptions that are given in the Scripture of the worst of Men; and therefore if it were granted that irresistible Grace were necessary for the Conversion of such, it will not follow that the same is necessary to all.*

All unregenerate Men are not equally devoid of a sense of God, and Spiritual things; they have many Convictions of what they ought to be and do, and under those Convictions are very capable of perswasion, which dead Men are not. The Grace of God is necessary to the Conversion of a Sinner, but it is not necessary that he should be *only passive* in this work. Experience

perience tells us the contrary, that we can do something, that we can co-operate with the Grace of God ; and the Scripture tells us the same, and makes it an argument and encouragement to us *to work out our own Salvation*, because *God works in us both to will and to do of his own goodness*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. Besides that, it is the greatest and justest discouragement in the world to all endeavours of Repentance and Reformation, to tell Men that they can do nothing in it. He that is sure of this, that he can do nothing in this work, is a Fool if he make any attempt to become better, because he struggles with an impossibility ; and if the work will be done at all, it will be done without him, and he neither can, nor ought to have any hand in it. But will any Metaphor bear Men out against so palpable an Absurdity as this ?

And yet after all, there is no force in these Metaphors, to prove what they aim at by them. For if to be *dead in sin* signifies an utter impotency to goodness, then *to be dead to sin* must on the contrary signify an impossibility
of

Ser. 6.

Vol. IV. of *finning*; for just as the *unregenerate* Man is *dead in sin*, so he that is *regenerate* is said in Scripture to be *dead to sin*: But yet the best of regenerate Men, notwithstanding they are *dead to sin*, and *alive to God*, do offend in many things, and too frequently fall into sin. Why then should the Metaphor be so strong on the one side, that a Man who is said to be *dead in sin*, should not be able so much as to co-operate with the Grace of God in the work of Repentance and Conversion?

In short, if this be true, that Men in an *unregenerate* and *unconverted* state are perfectly *dead*, and have no more sense of Spiritual Things, than a dead Man hath of Natural Objects, then all Precepts and Exhortations to Repentance, and all Promises and Threatnings to argue and persuade Men thereto are vain, and to no purpose; and it would be every whit as proper and reasonable for us to preach in the Church-yard, over the Graves of dead Men, as in the Church to the *unregenerate*; because they can no more act and move towards their own recovery out of a state

state of Sin and Death, than the dead Bodies can rise out of their Graves.

Ser. 6.

But it is said, that the end of Exhortations and Promises is not to declare to Men their *Power*, but their *Duty*. But if they be *insensible*, it is to as little purpose to declare to them their *Duty*, as their *Power*. Besides, it will be an hard thing to convince Men that any thing is their *Duty*, which at the same time we declare to them to be *out of their Power*.

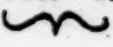
But this is *Pelagianism*, to say that of our selves we can Repent and turn to God. And who says we can of *our selves* do this besides the *Pelagians*? We affirm the necessity of God's Grace hereto, and withall, the necessity of our *co-operating* with the Grace of God. We say that without the powerful excitation and aid of God's Grace, no Man can Repent, and turn to God; but we say likewise, that God cannot be properly said to *aid* and *assist* those, who do nothing themselves.

But



But Men *can do no more than they do*, and therefore are justly Condemned. Not in the work of Conversion sure; if they can do *nothing at all*. But they can do more by way of *preparation* towards it. Suppose they do all they can towards it, will this save them, or will God upon this *irresistibly* work their Conversion? No, they say, notwithstanding any preparatory work that we can do, Conversion may not follow; how then does this mend the matter?

But still they say the fault is in Men's want of *will*, and not of *power*; *Tou will not come unto me, that ye might have life*. But can they *will* to come? No, that they cannot neither. Why then it is still want of *power* that hinders them. The offer of Life is a very gracious offer to them that are guilty, and liable to death, as we all are; but not if the Condition be utterly impossible to us, tho' the impossibility springs from our own fault, as I will plainly shew by a fair instance. A Prince offers a Pardon to a Traytor fast lockt in Chains, if he will come to him and submit himself; but

but if he be still detained in Chains, Ser. 6.
and the Prince do not some way or 
other help him to his Liberty, 'tis so
far from being a *favour* to offer him a
Pardon upon these terms, that it is a
cruel derision of his misery, to say to
him *you will not come to me that you may
be pardon'd*; and this notwithstanding
that his being cast into Chains, was the
effect of his own Crime and Fault; the
application is obvious. I should now
proceed to answer an Objection or two,
and then to give a clear state of this
Matter, so as is most agreeable to
Scripture, and the Attributes and Per-
fections of God; but this I shall reserve
for another Discourse.

SERMON

that he be still detained in Chains,
 and the Prince do not come way of
 and help him to his Liberty, as to
 from being a Prince to other things
 upon these terms, that it is a
 of his mother's misfortune, to say to
 you not come to me about your way
 and this now, understanding
 his being out into Chains, was the
 of his own Crime and fault; the
 application is not now, I should now
 proceed to answer Objection or two,
 and then to give a clear proof of this
 matter, to as is most applicable to
 the Prince, and the Princess and Per-
 sons of the Court, but this I shall reserve
 for another Occasion.

SERMON VII.

Of the Nature of Regeneration,
and its Necessity, in order to
Justification, and Salvation.

GALAT. VI. 15.

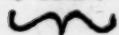
*For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision
availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision;
but a new Creature.*

THE Point which I am upon
from these words is, that ac-
cording to the terms of the Gos-
pel, nothing will avail to our Justifica-
tion, but the real renovation of our Hearts
and Lives.

For the full explication of this, I
propounded to shew.

First,

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First, What is implied in this expression of the *new Creature*.

Secondly, That this is the great Condition of our justification and acceptance with God.

Thirdly, That it is highly Reasonable that this should be the Condition of our Justification.

In speaking to the first of these, I have shewed, *1st*. What this Metaphor doth certainly import; and *2^{dly}*, That it doth not import what some would extend it to, whereon to found such Doctrines as these.

First, That as the Creation was an *irresistible* act of the Divine Power, so is this *new Creation*, or the Conversion of a Sinner.

Secondly, As Creatures were *meerly passive* in their being made, and contributed nothing at all to it, no more do we in our Conversion, and Regeneration.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That as the Creation of the several Kinds and Ranks of Creatures was effected *in an instant*, by the powerful Word of God, saying, *let such and such things be*, and immediately they were; so this *new Creation* is *in an instant*, and admits of no degrees.

The *first* of these I have consider'd, and enter'd upon the *second*; namely, that as the Creatures were *meerly passive* in their being made, and contributed nothing at all thereto, no more do we in our Conversion and Regeneration.

This I told you does plainly make void all the Precepts and Exhortations, and all the Promises and Threatnings of Scripture, to argue and perswade Men to Repentance.

That which remains to be done upon this Argument, is,

First, To answer an Objection or two, which are commonly urged by the Assertors of this Doctrine, that
O we

Vol. IV. we are *meerly passive* in the work of
 Conversion.

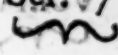
Secondly, To give a clear state of this Matter, so as is most agreeable to Scripture, and the Attributes and Perfections of God. For the

First, The Objections are these *three*.

1. That if we be not *meerly passive* in the work of Regeneration and Conversion, we ascribe the whole glory of this work to our selves, and not to God.

Or, *2dly*, We do however extenuate or lessen the Grace of God, if there be any active Concurrence and Endeavours of our own towards this Change.

3dly, They ask St. Paul's question, *Who maketh thee to differ?* and think it impossible to be answer'd, if the efficacy of God's Grace do depend upon our concurrence and compliance with it. These are all the Material Objections I know; to every one of which

which I hope to give a very clear *Ser. 7*
and sufficient Answer. 

1. *Objection.* If we be not *meerly*
passive in the Work of Regeneration
and Conversion, we ascribe the whole
glory of this work to our selves, and
not to God. But that I certainly
know this *Objection* is commonly
made, and have seen it in very *Consi-*
derable Authors, I could not believe
that Men of so good sense could make
it. For this is to say, that if we do
any thing in this work, tho' we ac-
knowledge that what we do in it, we
do by the assistance of God's Grace,
we ascribe it wholly to our selves, and
rob God altogether of the glory of
his Grace; or in plainer terms, it is
to say, that tho' we say God does ne-
ver so much, and we but very little
in this work, yet if we do not say
that God does *all*, and we *nothing at*
all, we take the whole work to our
selves, and say God does *nothing at*
all; which let any one that considers
what we say judge, whether we say
so or no.

The Scripture which never robs God of the glory of his Grace, does I'm sure ascribe our Conversion and Repentance, our Regeneration and Sanctification to several Causes; To the Holy Spirit of God, to his Ministers, to his Word, and to our selves. To the Holy Spirit of God, as the principal Author, and Efficient. Hence we are said *to be born of the Spirit, to be sanctified by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* To the Ministers of God, as the Instruments of our Conversion. Hence they are said *to turn Men to Righteousness, to Convert a Sinner from the evil of his ways, to save Souls from death, to save themselves, and them that hear them; to be our Spiritual Fathers, and to beget us in Christ.* To the word of God, as the subordinate Means and Instruments of our Conversion. Hence we are said *to be begotten by the word of truth, to be sanctified by the truth.* And lastly, to our selves, as concurring some way or other to this work. Hence we are said *to believe and repent, to turn from our evil ways, and to turn to the Lord, to cleanse and purifie our selves.*

selves. Hence likewise are those frequent Commands in Scripture, *to amend our ways and doings, to wash our hearts from wickedness, to repent and turn our selves, and to make our selves new Hearts, and new Spirits.* So that all these Causes, the Spirit of God, his Ministers, his Word, and we our selves, do all some way or other concur and contribute to this Effect. God indeed is the Principal, and hath so great an hand in this Work from beginning to end, that all the rest are nothing in Comparison, and we do well to ascribe to him the whole glory of it, *that no Flesh may glory in his sight:* But nevertheless in strictness of speech sufficiently warranted by Scripture, the Ministers of God, and the Word of God, and we our selves do all *co-operate* some way or other to our Conversion, and Regeneration; and by ascribing to any of these such parts as they truly have in this work, God is not robbed of *any part* of the glory of his Grace, much less of the *whole.* Much less is it the ascribing it *all* to our selves, whom we affirm to have *the least part* in it, not worthy to

Ser. 7.

Vol. IV. be mention'd, in Comparifon of *the riches of God's grace* towards us. And yet unlefs we do *something*, what can be the meaning of *making our selves new hearts and new fpirits*? Is it only that we fhould be *paſſive* to the *irre-ſiſtible* operation's of God's Grace? that is, that we fhould not hinder, what we can neither hinder nor promote; that we fhould fo demean our ſelves, as of neceſſity we muſt whether we will or no. So then *to make our ſelves new hearts and new fpirits*, is to do nothing at all towards the hinderance or furtherance of this work; and if this be the meaning of it, it is a Precept and Exhortation juſt as fit for *Stones*, as for *Men*; that is, very improper for either.

2. *Objection.* But however, we do extenuate and leſſen the Grace of God, if there be any active concurrence and endeavours on our part towards this Change. For answer to this, *three* things deſerve to be conſider'd.

First,

First, It is very well worthy our Consideration, that they who make this Objection, have the confidence to pretend that *they* do not diminish the Grace of God, by confining it to a very small part of Mankind in Comparison; nay, they will needs face us down, that by this very thing they do very much exalt and magnifie it, and that the Grace of God is so much the greater, but how much the fewer they are that are partakers of it. But I hope they only mean that the Grace is greater to themselves; (in which conceit there is commonly as much of envy as gratitude) but surely they cannot mean that the Grace which is limited to a few, is greater in it self, and upon the whole matter, than that which is extended to a great many; it being a down-right Contradiction, to say that the Grace of God is magnified by being confined. For at this rate of Reasoning, the lesser it is, the greater it must be, and by undeniable consequence would be greatest of all, if it were none at all. So that it seems the Grace of God may be extenuated in favour of

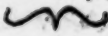
Vol.IV. our selves; but when we do so, we
 must say we magnifie it.

Secondly, But to come close to the Objection; tho' it be true, that if God's Grace in our Conversion do not do all, it does not do so much as if it did all; yet this is really no injury or dishonour to the Grace of God; and tho' in some sense it doth extenuate it, it doth not in truth and reality take off from the glory of it. In my Opinion, the grace and favour of a Prince is not the less in offering a Pardon to a Traytor, who puts forth his hand and gladly receives it, than if he forc'd it upon him whether he would or no. I am sure it is in the first Case much fitter to give it, and he on whom it is conferr'd much better qualified to receive it. 'Tis no disparagement to a Prince's Favour, that it is bestow'd on one who is in some measure qualified to receive it. But be it more or less in one Case than the other, this is certain, that in both Cases the Man owes his Life to the great grace and goodness of his Prince; and I cannot see how it lessens the Grace, that the miserable

miserable Object of it, the guilty and condemned Person, was either by his humble submission, or thankful acceptance of it, in some degree better qualified to receive such a Favour, than an obstinate Refuser of it. Ser. 7.

Thirdly, Which is the Principal Consideration of all, we must take great heed, that while we endeavour to make God to do *all* in the Conversion of Sinners, we do not by this means charge upon him the ruin and destruction of impenitent Sinners, which I doubt we should do, if we make the Reason of their impenitency and ruin their utter impotency and disability to Repent; and we certainly make this the Reason of their impenitency and ruin if there be no other difference but this between penitent and impenitent Sinners, namely, that in the one God works Repentance by an *irresistible* act of his Power, so that he cannot but Repent, and denies this Grace to the other, without which he cannot possibly Repent. But the Scripture chargeth the destruction of Men upon themselves, and lays their
impe-

Vol.IV. impenitency at their own door. *Oh Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help, Hosea 13. 9.* But where is the *help*, when the Grace absolutely necessary to Repentance is denied? And how is *their destruction of themselves*, if it is unavoidable, let them do what they can? *Isa. 5. 3, 4.* God appeals to his People *Israel*, that nothing was wanting on his part, that was fit and necessary to be done, that they might bring forth the fruits of Repentance, and better Obedience. *And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my Vineyard: what could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* Is it true that God hath done all that was necessary to have brought them to Repentance? Then if *irresistible* Grace be necessary, he afforded them *that*; but *that* was not afforded them, because then they must unavoidably have Repented, and there had been no cause for this Complaint: If he did not afford it, but only the *outward means* of

of Repentance without the *inward* Ser. 7.
grace (as some say;) then it is easie to 
judge why *they did not* Repent; Be-
cause *they could not*; and there seems
to be no Cause either of Wonder, or
Complaint. Besides that it will be
hard to justifie that Saying, *What*
could I have done more to my Vineyard,
that I have not done in it? when it is
acknowledg'd by the assertors of this
Doctrine, that the main thing was not
done, and that without which all the
rest signify'd nothing, leaving them
under the same impossibility of Repent-
ance, as if nothing at all had been
done to them.

But now upon *our* supposition, that
sufficient grace was afforded to them,
which they wilfully neglected to make
use of, the Reason and Equity of this
Complaint is evident, and God is ac-
quitted, as having done what was
needful on his part, and the Sinner
justly Condemned, for not concurring
with the Grace of God as he might
have done; which shews that we are
not *meerly passive* in this work, but
something is expected from us, after
God

Vol.IV. God hath done his part, which if we neglect to do, *our destruction is of our selves.* Whereas the contrary supposition, upon pretence of glorifying God's *Grace*, by making him to do *all* in the Conversion of Sinners, indangers the honour of his *Justice*, by laying the impenitency of Sinners, and their ruin consequent upon it, at his door; which is to advance one Attribute of God upon the ruin of another; whereas it is a Fundamental Principle of Religion, to take care to reconcile the Attributes and Perfections of God to one another; for that is not a Divine Perfection, which contradicts any other Perfection.

The 3^d *Objection* is grounded upon that question of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ?* which they think impossible to be answer'd, if the efficacy of God's *Grace* depend upon our concurrence and compliance with it. For, say they, when God offers his *Grace* to two persons for their Repentance, if the true Reason why the one Repents, and the other remains impenitent, be this, that the one
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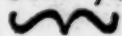
complieth with this Grace of God, and Ser. 7.
yieldeth to it, the other resists and
stands out against it; then it is not
the Grace of God which makes the
difference, for *that* is equal to both,
but something in themselves, and so
it is not *God that makes them to differ*,
but *they themselves*.

But this question is impertinent to
this Case. The Apostle speaks it con-
cerning Spiritual Gifts, upon account
of which, they factiously admir'd some
of the Apostles above others, and con-
cerning *them* the question is very pro-
per, *who maketh thee to differ?* Mira-
culous gifts were so order'd by God,
that Men were *meerly passive* in the re-
ceiving of them, and contributed no-
thing to the obtaining of them; and
therefore if one had greater gifts than
another, it was meerly the pleasure of
God that made the difference. But the
Case is not the same in the Graces of
God's Spirit, towards the obtaining
and improving whereof, we our selves
may contribute something; our Savi-
our having assur'd us, that *to him that*
hath, shall be given. And here the que-
stion

Vol.IV. sion is not proper, nor is it true *that the Grace of God makes all the difference.* It is indeed the Foundation of all the good that is in us : but our different Improvement makes different attainments in grace and goodness. Among those to whom the Talents were intrusted, what *made the difference* between the Man who *wrapt his Talent in the Napkin, and buried it,* and those who *gained double by theirs,* but that *the one improv'd the Grace conferr'd on him, the other neglected it,* and this without any manner of reflection upon, or diminution of the Grace of God, or any danger from St. Paul's question, *who maketh thee to differ?* Put the Case a Pardon is offered to two Malefactors, the one accepts, the other refuses it; *their own choise makes the difference between them;* but he that is saved is nevertheless beholden to the King's Pardon for his Life, and it were a senseless ingratitude in him, because he accepts the Pardon, when the other refuseth it, to say that he did not owe his Life to the grace and favour of his Prince, but might thank himself for it; whereas that he was in a capacity

capacity to accept a Pardon, was wholly due to the clemency of his Prince, who offer'd it to him when he no wise deserved it. In this Case the thing plainly appears as it is, by which every Man may see, that it is against common sense to pretend that the Grace of God is destroyed, if there be any compliance on our part with it; that it is no Grace, if it be not forc'd upon us, and we be not *meerly passive* in the reception of it. I proceed in the

Ser. 7.



Second place, to give a clear state of this Matter, so as is most agreeable to the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and the essential Attributes and Perfections of God. In order to which, I will give you a short view of the several Opinions concerning this Matter. And there are two *extream*, and two *middle* Opinions, concerning the operation of God's Grace in the Conversion of a Sinner.

The *First* of the *extream* Opinions is that which all this while I have been arguing against, namely, that all that are Converted and Regenerated, are wrought

Vol.IV. wrought upon in an *irresistible* manner, and are *meerly passive* in it; and that those who are not thus wrought upon, their Repentance and Conversion is *impossible*. What the inconveniences of this Opinion are, I have shewed at large.

The other *extream* Opinion is, that none are thus wrought upon, because it would be a violence and injury to Man's Natural Liberty; but that *sufficient* grace is offered to all, one time or other, who live under the Gospel, which they may comply with or resist; and consequently if they be not brought to Repentance, their impenitency and ruin, is the effect of their own choice, and God is *free from the blood of all Men*. But this Opinion, tho' infinitely more reasonable than the other, seems not to have any necessary Foundation either in Scripture or Reason. There are some instances in Scripture of the Conversion of Men after a very *violent*, if not an *irresistible* manner, which seems to be attributed to a particular *predestination* of God; as that of St. Paul, who says of himself,
Gal.

Gal. 1. 15. that he was separated from his Mother's Womb to that work to which he was called; and the manner of his Conversion was answerable to such a predestination; and there is nothing in Reason against this, since it is no injury to any Man to be made good and happy against his will. Ser. 7.

The two middle Opinions are these.

First, That irresistible Grace is afforded to all the Elect, and sufficient Grace to all others who live under the Gospel (for of those only we speak, the Case of others being peculiar, and belonging to the extraordinary Mercy of God) but then they say, that none of those to whom this sufficient Grace is afforded, shall effectually comply with it, and be saved. This Opinion seems more moderate, and hath this advantage in it, that it acquits the Justice of God in the Condemnation of those, who having sufficient Grace afforded to them, did yet notwithstanding continue impenitent; but yet it hath two great inconveniences in it.

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most beneficial and edifying . . . And
 First, That this Supposition is to no
 purpose, as to any real effect for the
 Salvation of Men, because not one
 person more is saved, notwithstanding
 this *Universal sufficient Grace*, which
 they say is afforded to all, for they
 take it for granted it is never *effectual*,
 and then it seems very unrea-
 sonable to suppose, that a Means *suf-*
sufficient to its End should *Universally*
 prove *ineffectual*; nay, on the contra-
 ry, it is next to a Demonstration a-
 gainst the *sufficiency* of a Means if
perpetually and in all instances it fails of
 its End. This would tempt any Man
 to think, that surely there is some de-
 fect in it, or something that hinders
 the efficacy of it; if being *perpetually*
 and *generally* afforded, it doth *perpetu-*
ally and universally miscarry, without
 so much as one instance among so ma-
 ny millions to the contrary. So that
 this Opinion seems rather to be con-
 triv'd for a colour and shelter against
 some absurdity, which Men know not
 how to avoid otherwise, than to
 serve any good purpose, or to be
 embraced

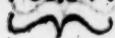
embraced for the truth and probability of it. Ser. 7.

The other *middle* Opinion is, That some are Converted in an *irresistible* manner, when God pleaseth, and whom he designs to be extraordinary Examples, and Instruments for the good of others, and that *sufficient* Grace is afforded to others, which is *effectual* to the Salvation of *many*, and *rejected* by a *great many*. And this avoids all the inconveniency of the other Opinion, and is evidently most agreeable both to the tenour of Scripture and to the best notions which Men have concerning the Attributes and Perfections of God, and gives greatest encouragement to the endeavours of Men. It agrees very well with the solemn declarations of Scripture, that God is not wanting on his part, to afford Men sufficient Means to bring them to Repentance; that he desires not the death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; That he would have all Men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; That he would not

*Vol. IV. that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance; That Mens destruction is of themselves. And this makes all the Exhortations and Motives of Scripture to Repentance to be of some force and significancy, and gives encouragement to the Resolutions and Endeavours of Men to become better. This clearly acquits the Justice of God in the Condemnation of impenitent Sinners, and fixeth the Reason of their ruin upon their own choice. This perfectly reconciles the operation and assistance of God's Grace in our Conversion and Regeneration, in our Sanctification and Perseverance in a good Course, with the concurrence of our own Endeavours, and makes those plain Texts of Scripture have some sense and significancy in them; *Work out your own Salvation; Repent and turn your selves from all your evil ways; Make ye new Hearts and new Spirits.* These are more than a thousand Metaphors to convince a Man, that we may and ought to do something towards our Repentance and Conversion.*

version. And if any Man be sure Ser. 7.
 that we neither do nor can do any thing in this Work, then I am sure that these Texts signifie nothing. Finally, these Texts which speak most clearly of the necessity of the Divine Grace and Assistance, to our doing of any thing that is spiritually good, do suppose something to be done on our part. That of our Saviour, *without me you can do nothing*, implies that *with his Grace and Assistance we can*. That of St. Paul, *I am able to do all things through Christ strengthning me*, implies, that what we do *by the strength of Christ* is truly *our own act*; *I am able to do all things*. And this does not in the least prejudice nor obscure the glory of God's Grace. St. Paul it seems knew very well how to reconcile these two, and to give the Grace of God its due, without rejecting all concurrence of our own Industry and endeavour, 1 Corin. 15. 10. *But by the Grace of God I am what I am; and his Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain*; not because it

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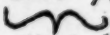


was irresistible, and he meerly passive in the reception of it; but because he did concurr and co-operate with it. So he tells us, his Grace that was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. So that our Concurrence and Endeavour in the doing of any thing that is good, does not derogate from the Grace of God, provided that we ascribe the good which we do to the assistance of Divine Grace, to which it is incomparably more due, than to our own activity and endeavour. And so St. Paul does, I labour'd abundantly; yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.

So that the glory of God's Grace may be advanced to its due pitch, without asserting that we are meerly passive to the Operations of it. God's Grace may be abundantly bestowed upon us, and yet we may labour abundantly; God may work in us to will and to do, and yet we may work
out

in the Work of Regeneration.

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out our own Salvation. I have done Ser. 7.
with the *Second Doctrine* grounded 
upon this Metaphor of a *New Crea-*
ture.

P 4 SERMON

and our own Salvation, I have done
with the Second Point grounded
upon the Metaphor of a New Creation.

II. SERMON

SERMON VIII.

Of the Nature of Regeneration,
and its Necessity, in order to
Justification, and Salvation.

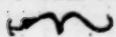
GALAT. VI. 15.

*For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision
availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision;
but a new Creature.*

IN Discoursing on these Words,
that which I was last upon was
to shew, that this Metaphor of a
New Creature doth not import what
some would extend it to, and that so
as to found Doctrines of great Con-
sequence upon the single strength of
this, and other like Metaphors, viz.
such Doctrines as these three.

First,

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First, That as the Creation was by an *irresistible* act of the Divine Power, so is this *new Creation*, or the *Conversion* of a Sinner.

Secondly, That as *Creatures* were *meerly passive* in their being made, and contributed nothing at all thereto, no more do we to our *Conversion* and *Regeneration*.

Thirdly, That as the Creation was *in an instant*, only by the powerful Word of God, so this *new Creation* is *in an instant*, and admits of *no degrees*. The *two* first of these I have spoken to, and shewed, that as they had no necessary Foundation in this and the like Metaphors of Scripture, so they are contrary to Reason and Experience, and the plain and constant tenour of Scripture, which is the Rule and Measure of Christ's Doctrine. I proceed now to consider the

Third Doctrine, which is grounded upon this Metaphor, namely, That as the Creation of the several Ranks and Orders

Orders of Creatures was in an instant, Ser. 8.
 and effected by the powerful Word of God, saying *let such and such things be*, and immediately they were; so this new Creation is in an instant, and admits of no steps and degrees. And this Doctrine is nothing else but a farther pursuit of the Metaphor; and admitting the two former Doctrines to be true, and well grounded upon this Metaphor, this third Doctrine follows well enough from them; for it is agreeable enough, that that which is effected by an irresistible act of Omnipotence, without any concurrence or operation on our part, should be done in an instant and all at once. Nor that this is necessary, but that it is reasonable; for why should Omnipotence use delays, and take time and proceed by degrees in the doing of that, which with the same ease it can do at once, and in an instant? especially considering how well this suits with the other Metaphors of Scripture, as well as with this of a new Creation, viz. the Metaphor of Regeneration, and Resurrection. A Child is born at once,

Vol. IV. *once, and the Dead shall be raised in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*


But notwithstanding all this plausible appearance and Conspiracy of Metaphors, I shall shew that this Doctrine of the Conversion and Regeneration of a Sinner being effected *in an instant, and all at once*, is not well grounded either upon Scripture, or Experience. Not but that God can do so if he pleaseth, and works this Change in some much sooner and quicker than in others; but there is nothing either in Scripture or Experience to perswade us that this is the *usual*, much less the *constant* and *unalterable* Method of God's Grace in the Conversion of a Sinner, to bring it about *in an instant*, without any sensible *steps* and *degrees*.

But for the full clearing of this Matter, I shall proceed by these steps.

First, I shall shew upon what mistaken Grounds and Principles this Doctrine relies; besides the Metaphors already

nor usually in an instant.

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already mention'd, which I have shewn Ser. 8.
to be of no force to prove the thing. 

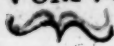
Secondly, I shall plainly shew what *Regeneration* is ; by which it will appear, that it is not *necessarily* effected *in an instant*, and *at once*, but admits of *degrees*.

Thirdly, That it is evidently so in experience of the *ordinary* Methods of God's Grace, both in those who are Regenerated by a Pious and Religious Education, and in those who are reclaimed from a vitious Course of Life.

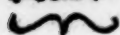
Fourthly, That all this is very consonant and agreeable to what the Scripture plainly and constantly declares concerning it.

First, I shall discover several Mistakes upon which this Doctrine is grounded, besides the Metaphors already mention'd, and which I have shewn to be of no force to prove the thing, *viz.* That Regeneration is *in an instant*, and admits of *no degrees*. As,

1. That

Vol. IV.  That Regeneration and Sanctification are not only different Expressions, but of ~~different~~ ^{different} things really different. || But this is a gross mistake; for Regeneration and Sanctification are but different expressions of the self same thing; for Regeneration is a Metaphor which the Scripture useth to express our translation and change from ~~one~~ ^{one} state to another, from a state of Sin and Wickedness, to a state of Grace and Holiness, as if we were ~~born~~ ^{born} over again, and were the Children of another Father, and from being the Children of the Devil, did become the Children of God; and Sanctification is our being made Holy, our being purified and cleansed from Sin and impurity. And hence it is that Regeneration and Sanctification are attributed to the same Causes, Principal, and Instrumental, to the Spirit of God, and to the Word of God; we are said to be ~~born~~ ^{born} again of the Spirit, and to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost; to be begotten of the word of truth, and to be sanctified by the truth, which is the word of God. So that the Scripture speaks of them as the same thing; and they must

must needs be so; for if *Sanctification* be the making of us Holy, and *Regeneration* make us Holy; then *Regeneration* is *Sanctification*. It is said, that *Regeneration* only signifies our first entrance into this state, and *Sanctification* our progress and continuance in it. But this likewise is a great Mistake. For tho' it be true, that *Regeneration* doth signify our first entrance into this state, yet it is not true, that it only signifies that; for it is used likewise in Scripture to signify our continuance in that State; for Christians are said to be the Children of God, and consequently in a regenerate state, not only in the instant of this Change, but during their continuance in it. Besides that, our first Change is as well call'd our *Sanctification*, as our Progress and Continuance in a state of Holiness. So that neither in this is there any difference between *Regeneration*, and *Sanctification*. They do both of them signify both our first entrance into an Holy state, and our continuance and progress in it; tho' *Regeneration* do more frequently denote the making of this Change, and our first entrance into it.



3. It is said that one of the main Differences between *Regeneration* and *Sanctification* is this, that *Regeneration* is incapable of *degrees*, and all that are Regenerate are *equally* so, and one Regenerate Person is not *more or less* Regenerate than another; whereas *Sanctification* is a *gradual progress* from one degree of Holiness to another, and of them that are truly Sanctified and Holy, one may be *more Sanctified* and *more Holy* than another. But this likewise is a meer fancy and imagination, without any real ground. For as an *unregenerate* state does plainly admit of *degrees*, so likewise doth the *regenerate*, and for the same Reason. That an *unregenerate* state admits of *degrees*, is evident, in that some *unregenerate* Persons are *more wicked* than others, and thereby *more the Children of wrath*, and *the Devil*, than others, which are the Scripture expressions concerning the *degrees* of Mens Wickedness and Impiety. In like manner, they that are *more Holy*, and *more like God*, are *more the Children of God*; and to be *more a Child of God*, is surely to be *more regenerate*,

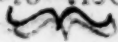
not usually in an instant.

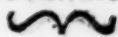
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nerate, that is, more renewed after the Image of God, which consists in Righteousness, and true Holiness. So that it is a meer precarious assertion, and evidently false to affirm, that Regeneration doth not admit of degrees, and that one is not more Regenerate than another.

4thly, and lastly, They ground this Conceit upon the Doctrine of the Schools, which teach, that in Regeneration and Conversion all the Habits of Grace are infused, *simul & semel*, together, and at once. I confess I have no regard, much less a veneration for the Doctrine of the Schools, where it differs from that of the Holy Scriptures, which say not one word of infused habits, which yet are much talk'd of in Divinity; and to speak the truth, these words serve only to obscure the thing. For to say that in Conversion the habits of all Graces and Virtues are infused together and at once, is to say, that in an instant Men that were vicious before in several kinds, are by an Omnipotent act of God's Grace, and by a new Principle infused into them, endued with the Habits of the contrary

Vol. IV. contrary Graces and Virtues, and are as
 Chast, and Temperate, and Just, and
 Meek, and Humble, as if by the fre-
 quent practice of these Virtues they
 had become so. That this *may be*, and
sometimes is, I am so far from deny-
 ing, that I believe it to be so. Some
 Men, by an extraordinary power of
 God's Grace upon their hearts, are *sud-*
dently changed, and strangely reclaimed
 from a very Wicked and Vicious, to a
 very Religious and Virtuous Course of
 Life, and that which others attain to
 by slower degrees, and great conflicts
 with themselves, before they can gain
 the upper hand of their Lusts, these
 arrive at *all on the sudden*, by a mighty
 Resolution wrought in them by the
 power of God's Grace, and as it were
 a new byass and inclination put upon
 their Souls, equal to an Habit gain'd
 by long use and custom. This God
sometimes does, and when he does this,
 it may in some sense be call'd *the in-*
fusion of the habits of Grace and Virtue
together and at once, because the Man is
 hereby endowed with a Principle of
 equal force and power with Habits that
 are acquir'd by long use and practice.



A strong and vigorous Faith is the principle and root of all Graces and Virtues, and may have such a powerful influence upon the Resolutions of our Minds, and the government of our Actions, that from this Principle all Graces and Virtues may spring and grow up by degrees into Habits; but then this Principle is not *formally* but *virtually*, in the power and efficacy of it; *the infusion of the habits of every Grace and Virtue*; and even in those Persons in whom this Change is so *suddenly*, and as it were *at once*, I doubt not but that the Habits of several Graces and Virtues are afterwards attained by the frequent practice of them, in the virtue of this powerful Principle of the Faith of the Gospel, as I shall shew in the progress of this Discourse. And this I doubt not was very frequent and visible in many of the first Converts to Christianity; especially of those, who from the abominable Idolatry and Impiety of Heathenism were gained to the Christian Religion. The Spirit of God did then work very Miraculously, as well in the Cures of Spiritual as of Bodily Diseases. But

Vol. IV. then to make this the Rule and Standard of God's ordinary Proceedings in the Conversion and Regeneration of Men, is equally unreasonable, as still to expect Miracles for the Cure of Diseases; and 'tis certain in experience, that this is not God's *ordinary* Method in the Conversion of Sinners, as I shall fully shew by and by.

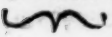
Secondly, I shall shew what *Regeneration* is, by which it will plainly appear, that there is no necessity that it should be effected *in an instant*, and *at once*, but that it will admit of *degrees*. I do not deny that it may be *in an instant*, and *at once*. The Power of God is able to do this, and *sometimes* does it *very thoroughly*, and *very suddenly*. But the question is, whether there be a *necessity* it should be so, and *always* be so. Now *Regeneration* is the change of a Man's state, from a state of *Sin*, to a state of *Holiness*; which because it is an entrance upon a new kind or course of Life, it is fitly resembled to *Regeneration*, or a *new Birth*; to a *new Creation*, the Man being as it were *quite changed*, or *made over again*, so as
not

not to be, as to the main purpose and Ser. 8.
 design of his Life, *the same Man* he was before. This is a plain sensible account of the thing, which every one may easily understand. Now there is nothing in Reason, why a Man may not *gradually* be changed and arrive at this state *by degrees*; as well as after this change is made, and he arrived at this state of a Regenerate Man, he may *by degrees* grow and improve in it. But *the latter* no Man doubts of, but that a Man that is in a state of Grace, may *grow* and *improve* in Grace; and there is as little Reason to question why a Man may not *come to this state by degrees*, as well as *leap into it at once*.

All the difficulty I know of in this Matter, is a meer nicety, that there is *an instant* in which every thing begins, and therefore *Regeneration* is *in an instant*; so that the instant before the Man arrived at this state, it could not be said *that he was Regenerate*; and the instant after he is in this state, it cannot be denied that he is so. But this is idle Subtlety, just as if a Man

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should

Vol.IV.  should prove that an House was built *in an instant*, because it could not be said *to be built*, 'till the instant it was *finish'd*; tho' for all this, nothing is more certain than that it was built *by degrees*. Or, suppose the time of arriving at Man's estate be at *one and twenty*, does it from hence follow, that a Man does not grow to be a Man *by degrees*, but is made a Man *in an instant*; because just before *one and twenty* he was not at Man's estate, and just then he was? Not but that God, if he please, can make a Man *in an instant*, as he did *Adam*; but it is not necessary from this Example, that all Men should be made so, much less does it follow from this vain Subtilery. This is just the Case. All the while the Man is tending towards a Regenerate state, and is struggling with his Lusts, 'till by the power of God's Grace, and his own Resolution he get the Victory; all the while he is under the sense and conviction of his sinful and miserable state, and sorrowing for the folly of his past Life, and coming to an effectual Purpose and Resolution of changing his Course; and it may be several

several times thrown back by the Ser. 8.
 temptations of the Devil, and the power of evil Habits, and the weakness and instability of his own purpose; 'till at last, by the Grace of God following and assisting him, he comes to a firm Resolution of a better Life, which Resolution governs him for the future; I say all this while, which in some Persons is longer, in others shorter, according to the power of evil Habits, and the different degrees of God's Grace afforded to Men; all this time the Work of *Regeneration* is going on; and tho' a Man cannot be said to be in a *Regenerate state*, 'till that very instant that the Principle of Grace and his good Resolution have got the upper hand of his Lusts, yet it is certain for all this, that the Work of *Regeneration* was not effected in an instant. This is plainly and truly the Case, as I shall shew in the

Third Particular I propounded, namely, that it is evident from experience of the *ordinary* Methods of God's Grace, both in those who are Regenerated by a Pious and Religious Education,

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tion; and those who are reclaimed from a vicious Course of Life.

The first sort, namely those who are brought to goodness by a Religious and Virtuous Education; these (at least, so far as my Observation reacheth) make up a very considerable part of the number of the *Regenerate*, that is, of *good Men*. And tho' it be certain, considering the Universal Corruption and degeneracy of Humane Nature, that there is a real Change made in them, by the operation of God's Grace upon their Minds, yet it is as certain in experience, that this Change is made in very many, by very *silent* and *insensible degrees*, 'till at length the seeds of Religion, which were planted in them by a good Education, do visibly prevail over all the evil inclinations of corrupt Nature, so as to sway and govern the Actions of their Lives; and when the Principles of grace and goodness do *apparently prevail*, we may conclude them *to be in a Regenerate state*, tho' perhaps very few of these can give any account of the particular time and occasion of this Change. For things

things may be seen in their *Effect*, Ser. 8. which were never very sensible in their *Cause*. And it is very Reasonable, that such Persons who never lived in any evil course, should escape those Pangs and Terrours which unavoidably happen unto others, from a course of actual Sin, and the guilt of a wicked Life; and if there be any such Persons as I have described, who are in this *gradual* and *insensible* manner Regenerated, and made good, this is a Demonstration, that there is *no necessity* that this Change should be *in an instant*, it being so frequently found to be otherwise in Experience.

And as for others, who are visibly reclaimed from a notorious wicked Course, in these we likewise frequently see this Change *gradually* made, by strong impressions made upon their Minds, most frequently by the Word of God; sometimes by his Providence, whereby they are convinc'd of the evil and danger of their Course, and awakened to Consideration, and melted into Sorrow and Repentance, and perhaps exercis'd with great terrours
of

Vol. IV. of Conscience, 'till at length by the Grace of God, they come to a fixt Purpose and Resolution of forsaking their Sins, and turning to God; and after many struglings and conflicts with their Lusts, and the strong byass of evil Habits, this Resolution assisted by the Grace of God, doth effectually prevail, and make a real change both in the Temper of their Minds, and the Course of their Lives; and when this is done, and not before, they are said to be *Regenerate*. But all the while this was a doing, the *new Man* was forming, and the work of Regeneration was going on; and it was perhaps a very considerable time from the first beginning of it, 'till it came to a fixt and settled state. And this I doubt not in experience of most Persons who are reclaim'd from a vicious course of Life, is found to be the usual and ordinary Method of God's Grace in their Conversion. And if so, it is in vain to pretend that a thing is done *in an instant*, which by so manifold experience is found to take up a great deal of time, and to be effected *by degrees*.

And

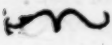
nor usually in an instant.

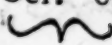
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Ser. 8.

And whereas some Men are pleased to call all this the *Preparatory* work to Regeneration, but not the Regeneration it self, this is an idle contention about words. For if these Preparations be a degree of goodness, and a gradual tendency towards it, then the work is begun by them, and during the continuance of them, is all the while a doing; and tho' it be hard to fix the point or instant when a Man just arrives at this state, and not before, yet it is very sensible when a Man is in it, and this Change when it is really made, will soon discover it self by plain and sensible effects.

Fourthly, and Lastly, all this is very agreeable to the plain and constant tenour of Scripture.. *Isa.* 1. 16. where the Prophet exhorts to this Change, he speaks of it as a *gradual* thing, *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well;* that is, break off evil and vicious Habits, and gain the contrary Habits of virtue and goodness by the exercise of it. The Scripture

Vol.IV.  pture speaks of some, as farther from a state of Grace than others, *Jer. 13. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil;* plainly declaring the great difficulty, equal almost to a natural impossibility, of reclaiming those to goodness, who have been long habituated to an evil course. And the Scripture speaks of some as nearer to a state of Grace than others. Our Saviour tells the young Man in the Gospel, who said *he had kept the Commands of God from his youth;* that *he was not far from the Kingdom of God.* But now if by an irresistible act of God's power, this Change be made *in an instant*, and cannot otherwise be made, how is one Man nearer to a state of Grace, or farther from it than another? If all that are made good, must be made so *in an instant* or not at all, then no Man is nearer being made good than another; for if he were nearer to it, he might sooner be made so; but that cannot be, if all must be made good *in an instant*; for sooner than that no Man can be made so. If the similitude of our *being dead in sins and trespasses*

trespasses be strictly taken, no Man is Ser. 8.
 nearer a Resurrection to a new Life 
 than another; as he that died but a
 week ago, is as far from being raised
 to life again, as he that died a thou-
 sand years ago; the Resurrection of
 both requires an Omnipotent act, and
 to that both are equally easie.

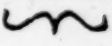
The two Parables of our Saviour,
Matth. 13. 31, 33. are by many In-
 terpreters understood of the gradual
 operation of Grace upon the hearts of
 Men. That wherein the Kingdom of
 Heaven is likened to a grain of Mustard-
 seed, which being sown was the least of all
 seeds, but by degrees grew up to be the
 greatest of herbs; and to leaven, which a
 Woman took and hid in three measures of
 meal, till the whole was leavened; inti-
 mating the progress of God's Grace,
 which by degrees diffuseth it self over
 the whole temper of a Man's Mind,
 into all the actions of his Life. To be
 sure the Parable of the seed which fell
 upon good ground, does represent the
 efficacy of the Word of God, accom-
 panied by his Grace upon the Minds of
 Men, and that is said to spring up
 and

Vol.IV. *and increase, and to bring forth fruit with patience; which surely does express to us the gradual operation of God's Word and Grace in the Renovation and Change of a Man's Heart and Life.*

The New Testament indeed speaks of the sudden Change of many upon the first preaching of the Gospel, which I have told you before is not a standard of the ordinary Method of God's Grace, the not considering of which, hath been a great Cause of all the Mistakes in this Matter. 'Tis true, those which were thus Converted to the belief of the Gospel, their Faith was a *virtual Principle* of all grace and virtue, tho' not *formally the habit* of every particular Grace. St. Paul himself, who was a prime instance of this kind, speaks as if he acquir'd the Grace of Contentment by great Consideration, and diligent Care of himself in several Conditions; not as if the Habit of this Grace had been infused into him at once, *Phil. 4. 11, 12. I have learn'd in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased,*
and

nor usually in an instant.

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and I know how to abound ; every where Ser. 8.
and in all things I am instructed, both 
to be full, and to be hungry ; both to a-
bound, and to suffer need. And thus I
have done with the *first* thing I pro-
pounded to Consider, namely, the true
and just Importance of this Metaphor
of *the new Creation.* The *two* Particu-
lars which remain, I shall by God's
assistance finish in my next Dis-
course.

SERMON

and I know this to abound; every where
and in all corners I am instructed both
to be still, and to be brought forth to a
knowing, and to suffer need. And thus I pro-
ceed to consider, namely, the true
and just importance of this Metaphor
of the new Creation. The two Particu-
lars which remain, I shall by God's
assistance finish in my next Dis-
course.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

Of the Nature of Regeneration,
and its necessity, in order to
Justification and Salvation.

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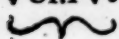
*For in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision
availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision;
but a new Creature.*

THE Observation I am fallen upon
from these Words is this, viz.
That in the Christian Reli-
gion nothing will avail to our Justi-
fication, but the Renovation of our
Hearts and Lives, exprest here by a
New Creature. In treating of which,
I propos'd the doing of three things.

R

First,

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First, To shew the true import of this Metaphor of a new Creature.

Secondly, To shew that this is the great Condition of our Justification; And,

Thirdly, That it is highly Reasonable that it should be so.

In treating of the *first* of these Particulars, I have consider'd some Doctrines as founded upon this Metaphor, which I have shewn at large, not only to have no Foundation in Scripture, or Reason, or Experience; but also to be very unreasonable in themselves, and contrary to the plain and constant Tenour of Scripture, and to the ordinary Method of God's Grace in the Regeneration of Men, whether by a Religious and Virtuous Education, or in those who are reclaim'd from a notorious wicked Course of Life. And that I have so long insisted upon this Argument, and handled it in a more contentious way than is usual with me, did not proceed from any

any love to Controversie, which I am Ser. 9.
 less fond of every day than other;
 but from a great desire to put an end
 to these Controversies, and quarrel-
 lings in the dark, by bringing them to
 a clear state and plain issue, and like-
 wise to undeceive good Men concern-
 ing some current Notions and Do-
 ctrines, which I do really believe to be
 dishonourable to God, and contrary
 to the plain declarations of Scripture,
 and a cause of great perplexity and
 discomfort to the Minds of Men, and
 a real discouragement to the Resoluti-
 ons and Endeavours of becoming bet-
 ter. Upon which Considerations I
 was strongly urgent to search these
 Doctrines to the bottom, and to con-
 tribute what in me lay, to the rescu-
 ing of good Men from the disquiet
 and entanglement of them.

I will conclude this Matter with a
 few Cautions not unworthy to be re-
 membered by us; That we would be
 careful so to ascribe all Good to God;
 that we be sure we ascribe nothing
 to him that is Evil, or any ways un-
 worthy of him; That we do not

Vol. IV. make him the sole Author of our Salvation, in such a way, as will unavoidably charge upon him the final impenitency and ruine of a great part of Mankind; That we do not so magnifie the Grace of God, as to make his Precepts and Exhortations signifie nothing. Such as these, *Make ye new Hearts, and new Spirits; strive to enter in at the strait gate; Where, if by the strait gate be meant the difficulty of our first entrance upon a Religious Course, that is, of our Conversion and Regeneration, I cannot imagine how it is possible to reconcile our being merely passive in this work, and doing nothing at all in it, with our Saviour's Precept of striving to enter in at the strait gate; unless to be very active, and to be merely passive about the same thing be all one, and an earnest contention and endeavour be the same thing with doing nothing.* Again, that we do not make the utmost degeneracy and depravation which Men ever arrived at by the greatest abuse of themselves, and the most vile and wicked practices, the Standard of an unregenerate state, and of the common Condition

dition of all Men by Nature. And lastly, that we do not make some particular instances in Scripture, of the strange and sudden Conversion of some Persons (as namely, of St. Paul and the Jaylor in the *Acts*) the common rule and measure of every Man's Conversion; so that unless a Man be as it were struck down by a Light and Power from Heaven, and taken with a fit of trembling, and frightened almost out of his wits, or find in himself something equal to this, he can have no assurance of his Conversion; whereas a much surer Judgment may be made of the sincerity of a Man's Conversion, by the real effects of this Change, than by the Manner of it. This our Saviour hath taught us, by that apt resemblance of *the operation of God's Spirit to the blowing of the wind*, of the Original Cause whereof, and of the reason of its ceasing or continuance, and why it blows stronger or gentler, this way or that way, we are altogether ignorant; but *that it is*, we are sensible from the sound of it, *John 3. 8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound of it,*

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but

Vol. IV. *but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The effects of God's Holy Spirit in the Regeneration of Men are sensible, tho' the manner and degrees of his operation upon the Souls of Men are so various, that we can give no account of them; by which, one wou'd think our Saviour had sufficiently caution'd us, not to reduce the Operations of God's Grace and Holy Spirit in the Regeneration of Men, to any certain Rule or Standard, but chiefly to regard the sensible effects of this secret work upon the Hearts and Lives of Men.

And after all, it is in vain to contend by any Arguments against clear and certain experience. If we plainly see that many are *insensibly* changed, and made good by pious Education, *in the Nature and Admonition of the Lord;* and that some who have long lived in a prophane neglect and contempt of Religion, are by the secret power of God's Word and Holy Spirit, upon calm consideration, without any great terrours and amazement, visibly changed

ged and brought to a better Mind Ser. 9.
 and Course; it is in vain in these Cases
 to pretend that this Change is not
 real, because the Manner of it is not
 answerable to some Instances which are
 Recorded in Scripture, or which we
 have observ'd in our Experience, and
 because these Persons cannot give such
 an account of the time and manner of
 their Conversion, as is agreeable to
 these instances; which is just as if I
 should meet a Man beyond Sea, whom
 I had known in *England*, and would
 not believe that he had cross'd the Seas,
 because he said he had a smooth and
 easie passage; and was wafted over by
 a gentle Wind, and could tell no Sto-
 ries of Storms and Tempests.

And thus I have fully and faithfully
 endeavour'd to open to you the just
 importance of this Phrase or Expres-
 sion in the Text, of *the new Creature*,
 or *the new Creation*. I proceed to the

Second Particular I propounded,
 namely, that the real Renovation of
 our Hearts and Lives, is according to
 the terms of the Gospel, and the Chri-

Vol. IV. *Christian Religion, the great Condition of our justification and acceptance with God; and that this is the same in sense and substance with those Phrases in the parallel Texts to this, of Faith perfected by Charity, and of keeping the Commandments of God.*

That according to the terms of the Gospel, the great Condition of our justification and acceptance with God, is the real Renovation of our Hearts and Lives, is plain, not only from this Text, which affirms, that in the Christian Religion nothing will avail us but *the new Creature*; but likewise from many other clear Texts of Scripture; and this, whether by Justification be meant our first Justification upon our Faith and Repentance, or our continuance in this state, or our final Justification by our solemn Acquittal and Absolution at the Great Day, which in Scripture is called *Salvation, and Eternal Life.*

That this is the Condition of our first Justification, that is, of the Forgiveness of our Sins, and our being received

ceived into the Grace and favour of Ser. 9. God, is plain from all those Texts, where this Change is exprest by our *Repentance* and *Conversion*, by our *Regeneration* and *Renovation*, by our *Purification* and *Sanctification*, or by any other terms of the like importance. For under every one of these Notions, this Change is made the Condition of the forgiveness of our Sins, and acceptance to the favour of God.

Under the Notion of *Repentance* and *Conversion*, Acts 2. 38. *Repent and be Baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* Acts 3. 19. *Repent, and be Converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* Upon the same account, the penitent acknowledgment of our Sins, which is an essential part of Repentance, is made a Condition of the forgiveness of them, 1st John 1. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Under the notion of *Regeneration* and *Renovation*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any Man be in Christ, that is, become a true Christian, which is all*
one

Vol. IV. one with being in a justified state; he is a new Creature; old things are past away, behold all things are become new. Tit. 3. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. where the Apostle declares at large, what Change is requir'd to put us into a justified state, and to entitle us to the inheritance of Eternal Life. For we our selves were also sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by works of Righteousness which we have done; that is, not for any precedent Righteousness of ours, for we were great Sinners; but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his Grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of Eternal Life. So that the Change of our former Temper, and Conversion, and Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, is antecedently necessary to our Justification, that is, to the
pardon

pardon of our Sins, and our restitution to the favour of God, and the hope of Eternal Life. So likewise under the notion of *Purification* and *Sanctification*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. where the Apostle enumerates several Sins and Vices, which will certainly exclude Men from the Favour and Kingdom of God, from which we must be cleansed, before we can be justified or saved. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.* where the Apostle likewise makes our *purification* a Condition of our being received into the favour of God, and reckon'd into the number of his Children. *Touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*
And

Ser. 9.
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Vol. IV. And that by *not touching the unclean thing*, is here certainly meant our Sanctification and Purification from Sin, is evident from what immediately follows in the beginning of the next Chapter; *Having therefore these promises, Dearly Beloved! let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*; that is, having this Encouragement, that upon this Condition we shall be received to the favour of God, let us purify our selves, that we may be capable of this great Blessing.

And our continuance in this state of grace and favour with God, depends upon our perseverance in Holiness; for *if any man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

And Lastly, this is also the Condition of our final Justification, and Absolution by the Sentence of the great Day, *Mat. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. John. 3. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Heb. 12. 14. Follow holiness, without which, no man shall*

shall see the Lord, 1 John. 3. 3. The Apostle there speaking of the blessed sight and enjoyment of God, tells us what we must do, if ever we hope to be partakers of it; *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

And this Condition here mentioned in the Text, of our being *New Creatures*, is the same in sense and substance with those Expressions which we find in the two parallel Texts to this, where *Faith which is perfected by Charity, and keeping the Commandments of God*, are made the Condition of our justification and acceptance with God. Gal. 5. 6. *In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision; but Faith, which is consummate, or made perfect by Charity; and* 1 Cor. 7. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the Commandments of God.* It is evident that the Design and Meaning of these three Texts is the same, and therefore these three Expressions of *the new Creature*, and of *Faith perfected by Charity*, and of *keeping the Commandments*

Vol. IV. *mandments of God, do certainly signify the same thing. That the New Creature signifies the change of our state, from a state of Disobedience and Sin, to a state of Obedience and Holiness of Life, I have shewn at large; and the Apostle explaining this New Creation, most expressely tells us, Ephes. 2. 10. We are his workmanship, Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them; and Colos. 3. 10, 12, 13, 14, where the Apostle tells them, that they ought to give testimony of their Renovation, and having put on the new Man, by all the fruits of Obedience and Goodness; To have put on the new Man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; and above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfection. And the Apostle St. Peter tells us, that our Regeneration, which he calls Sanctification of the Spirit, is unto obedience, 1 Pet. 1. 2. So that*

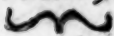
that our Renovation consisteth in the Ser. 19.
 Principle and Practice of Obedience, and a good Life; And what is this but *Faith perfected by Charity?* And *Charity* the Apostle tells us *is the fulfilling of the Law;* and what is *the fulfilling of the Law,* but *keeping the Commandments of God?* And *keeping the Commandments of God,* or at least a sincere Resolution of Obedience, when there is not time and opportunity for the tryal of it, is in Scripture as expressly made a Condition both of our present and final justification and acceptance with God, as *Faith* is, and in truth is the same with a *living and operative Faith,* and a *Faith that is consummate,* and made perfect by *Charity.* Acts 10. 34, 35. *Of a truth I perceive (saith St. Peter) that God is no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him;* which speech does as plainly, as words can do any thing, declare to us upon what terms all Mankind, of what Condition or Nation soever, may find acceptance with God. Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *Who will render to every Man according to his deeds, to them who by pa-*
tient

Vol. IV. *tient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life: but to them who are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath; Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: but Glory, Honour, and Peace to every Man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. As to our acceptance with God, and the Rewards of another World, it matters not whether Jew or Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised; that which maketh the difference, is obeying the Truth, or obeying Unrighteousness; working Good, or doing Evil; these are the things which will avail to our Justification, or Condemnation at the Great Day. To the same purpose is that Saying of the Apostle to the Hebrews, Chap. 5. 9. That Christ is the Author of Eternal Salvation to them that obey him.*

I will conclude this Matter with two Remarkable Sayings, the one towards the beginning, the other towards the end of the Bible, to satisfie us that this

this is the tenour of the Holy Scriptures, and the constant Doctrine of it from the beginning to the end. *Genl 4. 7. It is God's Speech to Cain, If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted: And Rev. 22. 14. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.*

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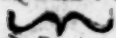
And thus I have done with the *Second* thing I propounded, which was to shew, that according to the terms of the Gospel, and the Christian Religion, the real Renovation of our Hearts and Lives is the great Condition of our justification and acceptance with God, and that this in sense and substance is the same with *Faith made perfect by Charity, and keeping the Commandments of God.*

The *Third* and last Particular remains to be spoken to, namely, That it is highly reasonable that this should be the Condition of our Justification, and acceptance to the favour of God; and that upon these two accounts.

S

First,

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First, For the honour of God's Holiness.

Secondly, In order to the qualifying of us for the favour of God, and the enjoyment of him; for the pardon of our Sins, and the Reward of Eternal Life.

First, For the honour of God's Holiness. For should God have received Men to his favour, and rewarded them with Eternal Glory and Happiness, for the meer belief of the Gospel, or a confident perswasion that Christ would save them without any change of their Hearts and Lives, without Repentance from dead works, and fruits meet for Repentance, and amendment of Life; he had not given sufficient testimony to the World of his Love to Holiness and Righteousness, and of his hatred of Sin and Iniquity. The Apostle tells us, that God in the justification of a Sinner declares his Righteousness; but should he justify Men upon other terms, this would not declare his Righteousness and love of Holiness, but

but rather an indifferency, whether Men were Good and Righteous or not. For a bare assent to the truth of the Gospel, without the fruits of Holiness and Obedience, is not a *living*, but a *dead Faith*, and so far from being acceptable to God, that it is an affront to him; and a confident reliance upon Christ for Salvation, while we continue in our Sins, is not a justifying Faith, but a bold and impudent presumption upon the Mercy of God, and the Merits of our Saviour; who indeed *justifies the ungodly*, that is, those that *have been so*, but not those that *continue so*. And if God should pardon Sinners, and reward them with Eternal Life, upon any other terms than upon our becoming *New Creatures*, than upon such a *Faith* as is *made perfect by Charity*, that is, by *keeping the Commands of God*; this would be so far from *declaring his Righteousness*, and being a testimony of his hatred and displeasure against Sin, that it would give the greatest countenance and encouragement to it imaginable.

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Secondly, It is likewise very Reasonable, that such a Faith, that makes us *New Creatures*, and is perfected by *Charity*, and keeping the *Commandments of God*, should be the Condition of *Justification*, in order to the qualifying of us for the Pardon of our Sins, and the Reward of *Eternal Life*; that is, for the favour of God, and for the enjoyment of him. To forgive Men upon other terms, were to give countenance and encouragement to perpetual Rebellion and Disobedience. That Man is not fit to be forgiven, who is so far from being sorry for his fault, that he goes on to offend; he is utterly incapable of Mercy, who is not sensible that he hath done amiss, and resolved to amend. No Prince ever thought a *Rebellious Subject* capable of Pardon upon lower terms than these. It is in the nature of the thing unfit that an obstinate Offender should have any Mercy or Favour shewn to him.

And as without Repentance and Resolution of better Obedience, we are unfit for Forgiveness, so much more

more for a Reward; as we cannot expect God's Favour, so we are incapable of the enjoyment of him without Holiness. Holiness is the Image of God, and makes us like to him; and 'till we be *like him*, we cannot see him, we can have no enjoyment of him. All delightful Communion and agreeable Society is founded in a similitude of Disposition and Manners, and therefore so long as we are unlike to God in the temper and disposition of our Minds, and in the Actions and Course of our Lives, neither can God take pleasure in us, nor we in him, but there will be a perpetual jarring and discord between him and us; and tho' we were in Heaven, and seated in the place of the Blessed, yet we should not, nay we could not be Happy; because we should want the necessary Materials and Ingredients of Happiness. For it is with the Soul in this respect, as it is with the Body; tho' all things be easie without us; and no Cruelty be exercised upon us, to give torment and vexation to us, yet if we be inwardly Diseased, we may have pain and an-

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gish enough, we may be as it were upon the rack, and feel as great torment from the inward disorder of our humours, as if we were tortur'd from without. So it is with the Soul, Sin and Vice are internal Diseases, which do naturally create trouble and discontent, and nothing but diversion, and the variety of Objects and Pleasures which entertain Men in this World, hinders a wicked Man from being out of his wits, whenever he reflects upon himself; for all the irregular Appetites and Passions, Lust, and Malice, and Revenge, are so many *Furies* within us; and tho' there were no Devil to torment us, yet the disorder of our own Minds, and the horrors of a guilty Conscience would be a Hell to us, and make us extremely miserable in the very Regions of Happiness. So that it is necessary that our *Faith* should be *made perfect by Charity*, and that we should become *new Creatures*; not only from the arbitrary constitution and appointment of God, but from the Nature and Reason of the thing; because nothing but this can dispose us for that Blessedness, which God hath promis'd

mis'd to us, and prepared for us. Ser. 9.
Faith consider'd abstractly from the
Fruits of Holiness and Obedience, of
Goodness and Charity, will bring no
Man into the favour of God. All the
excellency of Faith is, that it is the
Principle of a good Life, and furnish-
eth us with the best Motives and Ar-
guments thereto; the Promises and
Threatnings of the Gospel; and there-
fore in Heaven, when we come to
fight and enjoyment, faith and hope shall
cease, but charity never faileth; for
if it should, Heaven would cease to
be Heaven to us, because it is the very
frame and temper of Happiness; and
if this disposition be not wrought in
us in this World, we shall be altoge-
ther incapable of the felicity of the
other.

You see then what it is that must
recommend us to the favour of God;
the real Renovation of our Hearts
and Lives, after the Image of him
that Created us. This must be re-
paired in us, before ever we can hope
to be restored to the grace and fa-
vour of God, or to be capable of the

Vol. IV. Reward of Eternal Life. And what could God have done more Reasonable, than to make these very things the terms of our Salvation, which are the necessary Causes and Means of it? How could he have dealt more mercifully and kindly with us, than to appoint *that* to be the Condition of our Happiness, which is the only qualification that can make us capable of it?

I will conclude all with that excellent passage in the Wisdom of Solomon, Chap. 6. 17, 18. *The very true beginning of Wisdom is the desire of discipline, and the care of discipline is love, and love is the keeping of her laws, and taking heed to her laws is the assurance of incorruption.* The Summ of what I have said upon this Argument amounts to this, that upon the terms of the Gospel we can have no hope of the forgiveness of our Sins, and Eternal Salvation, unless our Nature be renewed, and the Image of God, which is defaced by Sin, be repaired in us, and we be *Created in Christ unto good works*; That no Faith will avail to our Justification

cation and acceptance with God, but Ser. 9.
that which is *made perfect by Charity*,
that is, by *fulfilling of the Law*, and
keeping the Commandments of God; by
sincere Obedience and Holiness of Life,
which notwithstanding the inavoidable
imperfection of it in this state, will
nevertheless be accepted with God,
through the Merits of our Blessed Sa-
viour, *who hath loved us, and washt us*
from our sins in his own blood. To whom
be Glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON

tion and acceptance with God, but Ser. 2.
 that which is made perfect by Charity,
 that is, by fulfilling of the Law, and
 keeping the Commandments of God; by
 which God's Love and Holiness of Life,
 which now, standing the inevitable
 imputation of it in this state, will
 nevertheless be accepted with God,
 through the merits of our blessed Sa-
 viour, who hath loved us, and washed us
 from our filth in his own blood. To whom
 be Glory for ever. Amen.

 SERMON

SERMON X.

The Danger of all known Sin,
both from the Light of Na-
ture, and Revelation.

R O M. I. 18, 19.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them.

IN the beginning of this Chapter, the Apostle declares that he was particularly designed and appointed by God to preach the Gospel to the World, and that he was not ashamed
of

Vol.IV. of his Ministry, notwithstanding all
 the Reproach and Persecution it was
 attended withal, and notwithstanding
 the slight and undervaluing Opinion
 which the World had of the Doctrine
 which he preached, it being *to the
 Jews a stumbling block, and to the
 Greeks foolishness*; for tho' this might
 reflect some disparagement upon it in
 the esteem of sensual and carnal Men,
 yet to those who weighed things im-
 partially, and consider'd the Excellent
 End and Design of the Christian Do-
 ctrine, and the force and efficacy of
 it to that end, it would appear to be
 an Instrument admirably fitted by the
 Wisdom of God, for the Reformation
 and Salvation of Mankind.

And therefore he tells us, *verse 16.*
 that how much soever it was despised
 by that ignorant and inconsiderate
 Age, he was not ashamed of the Gospel
 of Christ; because it is the power of God
 unto salvation, to every one that be-
 lieveth, *to the Jew first, and also to the
 Greek*; that is, the Doctrine of the
 Gospel sincerely believed and embrac-
 ed, is a most proper and powerful
 means

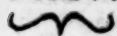
means, designed by God for the Salvation of Mankind; not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles. Ser. 10.

The Revelations which God had formerly made, were chiefly restrained to the Jewish Nation; but this great and last Revelation of the Gospel, was equally Calculated for the benefit and advantage of all Mankind. The Gospel indeed was first preached to the Jews, and from thence publish'd to the whole World; and as this Doctrine was design'd for the general benefit of Mankind, so it was very likely to be effectual to that end, being an Instrument equally fitted for the Salvation of the whole World, Gentiles as well as Jews; *it is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

And to shew the efficacy of it, he instanceth in two things, which render it so powerful and effectual a Means for the Salvation of Mankind.

First;

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First, Because therein the grace and mercy of God in the Justification of a Sinner, and declaring him Righteous, is so clearly revealed, ver. 17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith. This is very obscurely exprest, but the meaning of this Text will be very much cleared, by comparing it with another in the 3^d Chapter of this Epistle, ver. 20, 21, 22, &c. where the Apostle speaks more fully and expressly of the way of our Justification by the Faith of Jesus Christ, that is, by the belief of the Gospel. He asserts at the 20th verse, that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God. To this way of Justification by the deeds of the law, he opposeth the righteousness of God, by the faith of Jesus Christ, to all, and upon all them that believe, which is the Gospel way of Justification, ver. 21, 22. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, which

which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, Ser. 10.
unto all, and upon all them that believe. ~~~~~

The Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested: that is, the way which God hath taken to justify Sinners, and declare them Righteous, without the deeds of the Law, that is, without observing the Law of Moses, is manifested, that is, is clearly revealed in the Gospel, (which is the same with what the Apostle had said before, that the Righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel) being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, that is, the Righteousness of God, or the Justification of Sinners by Jesus Christ, is clearly revealed in the Gospel, being also in a more obscure manner attested or foretold in the Old Testament, which he calls the Law and the Prophets; and this fully explains that difficult Phrase of the Righteousness of God being revealed by the Gospel from faith to faith; that is, by a gradual Revelation, being more obscurely foretold in the Old Testament, and clearly discovered in the New; so that these two passages are equivalent; In the Gospel, the Righteousness of God is revealed from
faith

Vol. IV. *faith to faith; and the righteousness of God without the works of the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. There is the first and more imperfect Revelation of it, but the clear Revelation of it is in the Gospel; this the Apostle calls a Revelation from faith to faith, that is, from a more imperfect and obscure, to a more exprefs and clear discovery and belief of it. And then the Citation which follows is very pertinent, as it is written, The Just shall live by Faith; for this Citation out of the Old Testament plainly shews, that the way of Justification by Faith was there mentioned; or, as our Apostle expresseth it, was witnessed by the law and the prophets; and consequently that this was a gradual discovery, which he calls a Revelation from faith to faith. The Just shall live by Faith; that is, good Men shall be saved by their Faith, shall be justified and esteemed Righteous in the sight of God, and finally saved by their Faith. And so the Apostle in the 5th Chapt. of this Epistle, ver. 18. calls our Justification by the faith of the Gospel, the justification of Life, in opposition*

position to *Condemnation and Death*, Ser. 10.
which very well explains that Saying of the Prophet, *The Just shall live by Faith*. I have been the longer upon this, that I might give some light to a very difficult and obscure Text.

Secondly, The other Instance where-
by the Apostle proves the Gospel to
be so powerful a means for the reco-
very and Salvation of Men is, that
therein also the severity of God against
impenitent Sinners, as well as his
grace and mercy in the justification
of the penitent, is clearly revealed,
*ver. 18. For the wrath of God is re-
vealed from Heaven, against all ungod-
liness and unrighteousness of Men, who
hold the truth in unrighteousness; because
that which may be known of God is ma-
nifested in them, for God hath shewn it
unto them. The first, viz. the Grace
of God in our Justification and the Re-
mission of Sins past, is a most proper
and powerful Argument to encourage
us to Obedience for the future; no-
thing being more likely to reclaim
Men to their Duty, than the assurance
of indemnity for past Crimes; and the*
T other

Vol:IV. other is one of the most effectual Considerations in the World to deter Men from Sin, that *the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, &c.*

From which words I shall observe these Six Things.

First, The infinite danger that a wicked and sinful Course doth plainly expose Men to, *The wrath of God is here said to be revealed against the impiety and unrighteousness of Men.*

Secondly, The clear and undoubted Revelation which the Gospel hath made of this danger. *The wrath of God against the Sins of Men, is said to be revealed from Heaven.*

Thirdly, That every wicked and vicious practice doth expose Men to this great danger. *The wrath of God is said to be revealed against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of Men.*

Fourthly, That it is a very great aggravation of Sin, for Men to offend
against

against the light of their own Minds. Ser. 10.
The Apostle here aggravates the impiety and wickedness of the Heathen World, that they did not live up to the knowledge which they had of God, but contradicted it in their lives, which he calls *holding the truth in unrighteousness*.

Fifthly, The Natural knowledge which Men have of God, if they live wickedly, is a clear evidence of their *holding the truth in unrighteousness*. The Apostle therefore chargeth them with *holding the truth in unrighteousness*, because *that which may be known of God, is manifested in them, God having shewed it to them*.

Sixthly, and lastly, That the clear Revelation of the wrath of God in the Gospel, against the impiety and wickedness of Men, renders it a very powerful and likely means for the Recovery and Salvation of Men. For the Apostle proves *the Gospel of Christ* to be *the power of God to Salvation*, because *therein the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungod-*
T 2 *liness*

Vol.IV. *lines and unrighteousness of Men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; that is, against all impenitent Sinners.*

I shall at the present, by God's assistance, speak to the *three* first of these Particulars.

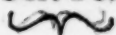
First, The infinite danger that a wicked and sinful course doth plainly expose Men to. If there be a God that made the World, and governs it, and takes care of Mankind, and hath given them Laws and Rules to live by, he cannot but be greatly displeased at the violation and transgression of them; and certainly the displeasure of God is the most dreadful thing in the World, and the effects of it the most insupportable. The greatest fear is from the greatest danger, and the greatest danger is from the greatest power offended and enraged; and this is a Consideration exceeding full of terror, that by a sinful Course we expose our selves to the utmost displeasure of the great and terrible God; for *who knows the power of his wrath? and who may stand before him when once he is angry?*

The danger of a sinful Course.

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angry? *According to thy fear, so is thy wrath* (saith the Psalmist.) There is no Passion in the Mind of Man that is more boundless and infinite than our fear; it is apt to make wild and frightful representations of Evils, and to imagine them many times greater than really they are; but in this Case our imagination must fall short of the truth and terrour of the thing; for the wrath of God doth far exceed the utmost jealousy and suspicion of the most fearful and guilty Conscience, and the greatest Sinner under his greatest anguish and despair, cannot apprehend or fear it more than there is Reason for; *according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*

Ser. 10.




If it were only the wrath and displeasure of *Men* that the Sinner were exposed to, there might be reason enough for fear, because *they* have many times power enough to crush an Offender, and cruelty enough to fret every vein of his Body, and to torment him in every part: but the wrath and vengeance of *Men* bears no Comparison with the wrath of *God*.

T 3

Their

Vol.IV. Their Passions are many times strong and blustering; but their arm is but short, and their power small, *they have not an arm like God, nor can they thunder with a voice like him.* They may design considerable harm and mischief to us; but it is not always in the power of their hand to wreak their Malice upon us, and to execute all the mischief which their enraged Minds may prompt them to; the very utmost they can design, is to torment our Bodies, and to take away our Lives, and when they have designed this, they may die first, and return to their dust, and then their thoughts perish with them, and all their malicious Designs are at an end; they are always under the Power and Government of a Superiour Being, and can go no further than he gives them leave. However if they do their worst, and shoot all their Arrows at us, we cannot stand at the Mark long, their wrath will soon make an end of us, and set us free from all their Cruelty and Oppression; *they can but kill the Body, and after that they have no more that they can do*; their most refined Malice cannot

not reach our *Spirits*, no *Weapon* that *Ser. 10.*
can be formed by the utmost art of 
Man can pierce and wound our *Souls*;
they can drive us out of *this World*,
but they cannot pursue us into the
other; so that at the worst the *Grave*
will be a *Sanctuary* to us, and *Death*
a safe *Retreat* from all their *Rage* and
Fury.

But the wrath of God is not confined by any of these limits. *Once hath God spoken* (saith *David* by an *Elegant Hebrew Phrase* to express the certainty of the thing) *once hath God spoken, and twice I have heard this, that power belongs to God, Psal. 62. 11. He hath a Mighty Arm*, and when he pleaseth to stretch it out, none may stay it, nor say unto him what dost thou; he hath power enough to make good all his threatnings; whatever he says he is able to effect, and whatever he purposeth he can bring to pass; for his *Counsel shall stand*, and he will accomplish all his pleasure; he need but speak the word, and it is done; for we can neither resist his Power, nor fly from it; if we fly to the utmost parts of the
out

Vol. IV. *Earth, his hand can reach us, for in his hand are all the corners of the Earth; if we take refuge in the Grave (and we cannot do that without his leave) thither his wrath can follow us, and there it will overtake us; for his power is not confined to this World, nor limited to our Bodies; after he hath kill'd, he can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell.*

And this is that *wrath of God* which is *revealed from Heaven*, and which the Apostle chiefly intends, viz. the *Misery and Punishment of another World*, this God hath threatened Sinners withall; to express which to us, as fully as words can do, he heaps up in the next Chapter so many weighty and terrible words, *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil*; in opposition to that great and glorious Reward of *immortality and eternal life*, which is promised to a *patient continuance in well-doing*.

So that the *wrath of God* which is here denounced *against the impiety and unrighteousness of Men*, comprehends all the

the Evils and Miseries of this and the other World, which every Sinner is in danger of whilst he continues impenitent; for as according to the tenour of the Gospel, *Godliness hath the promise of this Life, and of that which is to come*, so impenitency in Sin exposeth Men to the Evils of both Worlds, to the Judgments of *the Life that now is*, and to the endless and intolerable torments of *that which is to come*. And what can be more dreadful than the displeasure of an Almighty and Eternal Being? who can punish to the utmost, and *who lives for ever*, to execute his wrath and vengeance upon Sinners; so that well might the Apostle say, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*.

Consider this all ye that forget God, that neglect him, and live in continual disobedience to his Holy and Righteous Laws; much more those who despise and affront him, and live in a perpetual defiance of him. *Will ye provoke the Lord to jealousy? are ye stronger than he?* Think of it seriously, and forget him if you can, despise him if you dare; consider

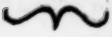
Vol. IV. consider this, lest he take you into consideration, and rouse like a Lion out of sleep, and *tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* This is the first Observation, the infinite danger that a wicked and sinful Course doth expose Men to, *the wrath of God*, which doth not only signifie more than all the Evils that we know, but than all those which the wildest fears and suspensions of our Minds can imagine.

Secondly, The next thing observable, is the clear and undoubted Revelation which the Gospel hath made of this danger, *the wrath of God is revealed, &c.* By which the Apostle intimates to us, that this was but obscurely known to the World before, at least in Comparison of that clear discovery which the Gospel hath now made of it; so that I may allude to that expression in *Job*, which he applies to Death and the Grave, that *Hell is naked before us, and destruction hath no covering.*

Not but that Mankind had always apprehensions and jealousies of the danger of a wicked Life, and Sinners were

were always afraid of the vengeance of God pursuing their evil Deeds, not only in this Life, but after it too; and tho' they had turned the Punishments of another World into ridiculous Fables, yet the wiser sort of Mankind could not get it out of their Minds, that there was something real under them; and that *Ixion's* Wheel, which by a perpetual motion carried him about; and *Sisyphus* his Stone, which he was perpetually rolling up the Hill, and when he had got it near the top tumbled down, and still created him a new labour; and *Tantalus* his continual hunger and thirst, aggravated by a perpetual nearness of enjoyment, and a perpetual disappointment; and *Prometheus* his being chained to a Rock, with an Eagle or Vulture perpetually preying upon his Liver, which grew as fast as it was gnawed; I say even the wiser among the Heathens lookt upon these as fantastical Representations of something that was Real, viz. the grievous and endless Punishment of Sinners, the not to be endured, and yet perpetually renewed Torments of another World; for

Ser. 10.

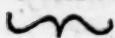
Vol. IV.  for in the midst of all the ignorance and degeneracy of the Heathen World, Mens Consciences did accuse them when they did amiss, and they had secret fears and misgivings of some mighty danger hanging over them, from the displeasure of a superior Being, and the apprehension of some great mischiefs likely to follow their wicked actions, which some time or other would overtake them; which because they did not always in this World, they dreaded them in the next. And this was the foundation of all those Superstitions, whereby the Ancient Pagans endeavoured so carefully to appease their offended Deities, and to avert the Calamities which they feared they would send down upon them. But all this while they had no certain assurance by any clear and express Revelation from God to that purpose, but only the jealousies and suspicions of their own Minds, naturally consequent upon those Notions which Men generally had of God, but so obscured and depraved by the Lusts and Vices of Men, and by the gross and false conceptions which they had of
God,

God, that they only serv'd to make them Ser. 10.
superstitious, but were not clear and
strong enough to make them wisely and
seriously Religious. And to speak the
truth, the more knowing and inquisi-
tive part of the Heathen World had
brought all these things into great
doubt and uncertainty, by the nicety
and subtilty of Disputes about them;
so that it was no great wonder, that
these Principles had no greater effect
upon the Lives of Men, when their ap-
prehensions of them were so dark, and
doubtful.

But the Gospel hath made a most
clear and certain Revelation of these
things to Mankind. It was written be-
fore upon Men's Hearts as the great
Sanction of the Law of Nature, but
the impressions of this were in a great
measure blurred and worn out, so that
it had no great power and efficacy,
upon the Minds and Manners of Men;
but now it is clearly discovered to us,
the wrath of God is revealed from Hea-
ven, which expression may well im-
ply in it these three things.

First,

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First, The Clearness of the Discovery ; the wrath of God is said to be revealed.

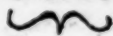
Secondly, The extraordinary Manner of it ; it is said to be revealed from Heaven.

Thirdly, The Certainty of it ; not being the result of subtle and doubtful Reasonings, but having a Divine Testimony and Confirmation given to it, which is the proper meaning of being revealed from Heaven.

First, It imports the clearness of the Discovery. The Punishment of Sinners in another World is not so obscure a Matter as it was before ; it is now expressly declared in the Gospel, together with the particular Circumstances of it, namely, that there is another Life after this, wherein Men shall receive the just recompence of Reward for all the actions done by them in this Life ; that there is a particular time appointed, wherein God will call all the World to a solemn account, and those

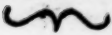
those who are in their Graves shall by a powerful voice be raised to Life, and those who shall then be found alive shall be suddenly changed; *when our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal and only begotten Son of God, who once came in great humility to save us, shall come again in Power, and great Glory, attended with his Mighty Angels, and all Nations shall be gathered before him, and all Mankind shall be separated into two Companies, the Righteous and the Wicked, who after a full Hearing, and fair Tryal, shall be sentenced according to their Actions, the one to Eternal Life and Happiness, the other to Everlasting Misery and Torment.*

Ser. 10.



So that the Gospel hath not only declared the thing to us, that there shall be a future Judgment; but for our farther assurance and satisfaction in this Matter, and that these things might make a deep impression, and strike a great awe upon our Minds, God hath been pleased to reveal it to us with a great many particular Circumstances, such as are very worthy of God, and

apt

Vol. IV. apt to fill the Minds of Men with
 dread and astonishment, as often as
they think of them.

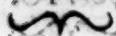
For the Circumstances of this Judgment revealed to us in the Gospel, are very solemn and awful, not such as the wild fancies and imaginations of Men would have been apt to have drest it up withal, such as are the Fictions of the Heathen Poets, and the extravagancies of *Mahomet*; which tho' they be terrible enough, yet they are withal ridiculous; but such as are every way becoming the Majesty of the great God, and the Solemnity of that great Day, and such as do not in the least favour of the vanity and lightness of humane imagination.

For what more fair and equal, than that Men should be tried by a *Man* like themselves, one of the same Rank and Condition, that had experience of the Infirmities and Temptations of Humane Nature? So our Lord tells us, that *the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, because he is the Son of Man*, and therefore cannot be excepted against,

against, as not being a fit and equal Judge. And this St. Paul offers as a clear proof of the equitable proceedings of that Day; *God (says he) hath appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained.*

And then what more congruous than that the Son of God, who had taken so much pains for the Salvation of Men, and came into the World for that purpose, and had used all imaginable means for the Reformation of Mankind, I say what more congruous, than that this very Person should be honoured by God to sit in Judgment upon the World, and to Condemn those, who after all the means that had been tried for their Recovery, would not Repent and be Saved. And what more proper, than that Men, who are to be judged for *things done in the Body*, should be judged *in the Body*, and consequently that the Resurrection of the Dead should precede the general Judgment.

U And



And what more Magnificent and suitable to this glorious Solemnity, than the awful Circumstances which the Scripture mentions of the appearance of this great Judge; that he shall descend from Heaven in great Majesty and Glory, attended with his mighty Angels, and that every eye shall see him; that upon his appearance, the frame of Nature shall be in an agony, and the whole World in Flame and Confusion; that those great and Glorious Bodies of Light shall be obscured, and by degrees extinguish'd; the Sun shall be darkned, and the Moon turned into Blood, and all the Powers of Heaven shaken; yea, the Heavens themselves shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements dissolve with fervent heat; the Earth also, and all the Works that are therein shall be burnt up. I appeal to any Man, whether this be not a Representation of things very proper and suitable to that Great Day, wherein he who made the World shall come to Judge it? and whether the Wit of Man ever devised any thing so awful, and so agreeable to the Majesty

jeſty of God, and the ſolemn Judgment of the whole World? The de- Ser. 10.
 ſcription which *Virgil* makes of the Judgment of another World, of the *Elyſian Fields*, and the *Infernal Regions*, how infinitely do they fall ſhort of the Ma-
 jeſty of the Holy Scripture, and the deſcription there made of *Heaven* and *Hell*, and of the *Great and Terrible Day of the Lord*! ſo that in Compari-
 ſon they are Childiſh and Trifling; and yet perhaps he had the moſt regular and moſt govern'd imagination of any
 Man that ever lived, and obſerved the greateſt decorum in his Characters and Deſcriptions. But who can declare the
 great things of God, but he to whom God ſhall reveal them!

Secondly, This Expreſſion of the wrath of God being Revealed from Heaven, doth not only imply the clear diſcovery of the thing, but likewise ſomething extraordinary in the man-
 ner of the Diſcovery. It is not only a Natural impreſſion upon the Minds of Men, that God will ſeverely puniſh Sinners; but he hath taken care that Mankind ſhould be inſtructed in this

Vol. IV. *Matter* in a very particular and extraordinary manner. He hath not left it to the Reason of Men to Collect it from the Consideration of his Attributes and Perfections, his Holiness and Justice, and from the Consideration of the promiscuous administration of his Providence towards good and bad Men in this World; but he hath been pleased to send an extraordinary Person from Heaven, on purpose to declare this thing plainly to the World, *the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven*; that is, God sent his own Son from Heaven, on purpose to declare his wrath against all obstinate and impenitent Sinners, that he might effectually awaken the drouzie World to Repentance; he hath sent an extraordinary Ambassador into the World, to give warning to all those who continue in their Sins, of the Judgment of the great Day, and to summon them before his dreadful Tribunal. So the Apostle tells the Athenians, Acts 17. 30, 31. *Now he commandeth all Men every where to Repent*; because he hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom

clearly revealed by the Gospel.

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whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead.

Ser. 10.

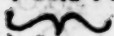
Thirdly, This Expression implies likewise the certainty of this Discovery. If the wrath of God had only been declared in the Discourses of Wise Men, tho' grounded upon very probable Reason, yet it might have been brought into doubt by the contrary Reasonings of Subtle and Disputing Men: but to put the Matter out of all question, we have a Divine Testimony for it, and God hath confirmed it from Heaven, by Signs, and Wonders, and Miracles, especially by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead; for *by this he hath given assurance unto all Men, that it is he who is ordained of God to judge the quick and dead.*

Thus you see in what respect the wrath of God is said to be revealed from Heaven, in that the Gospel hath made a more clear, and particular, and certain discovery of the Judgment of the great Day, than ever was made to the World before. I proceed to the

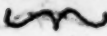
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Third Observation, which I shall speak but briefly to; namely, that every Wicked and Vicious Practice doth expose Men to this dreadful danger. The Apostle instanceth in the two chief Heads to which the Sins of Men may be reduced, *Impiety* towards God, and *Unrighteousness* towards Men; and therefore he is to be understood to denounce *the wrath of God* against every particular kind of Sin, comprehended under these general Heads; so that no Man that allows himself in any impiety and wickedness of Life, can hope to escape the wrath of God. Therefore it concerns us to be entirely Religious, and to have respect to all God's Commandments, and to take heed that we do not allow our selves in the practice of any kind of Sin whatsoever; because the living in any one known Sin, is enough to expose us to the dreadful wrath of God. Tho' a Man be Just and Righteous in his Dealings with Men, yet if he neglect the Worship and Service of God, this will certainly bring him under Condemnation: and on the other hand, tho' a Man may
serve

serve God never so diligently and devoutly, yet if he be defective in Righteousness toward Men, if he deal falsely and fraudulently with his Neighbour, he shall not escape the wrath of God; tho' a Man pretend to never so much Piety and Devotion, yet if he be *unrighteous, he shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; if any Man *overreach and defraud his Brother in any matter, the Lord is the avenger of such*, saith St. Paul, 1 Thes. 4. 6. Ser. 10. 

So that here is a very powerful Argument to take Men off from all Sin, and to engage them to a constant and careful discharge of their whole Duty toward God and Men, and to Reform whatever is amiss either in the frame and temper of their Minds, or in the Actions and Course of their Lives; because any kind of wickedness, any one sort of vicious Course, lays Men open to the vengeance of God, and the punishments of another World; *the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of Men*; there is no exception in the Case, we must forsake all Sin, subdue

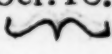
Vol. IV. every Lust, *be* hoby in *vall* manner of
 ~~~~~ Conversation, otherwise we can have  
 no reasonable hopes of escaping *the*  
*wrath* of God, and the damnation of  
 Hell. But I proceed to the

*Fourth* Observation; namely, that it  
 is a very great aggravation of Sin,  
 for Men to offend against the light of  
 their own Minds. The Apostle here  
 aggravates the wickedness of the Hea-  
 then World, that they did not live up  
 to that Knowledge which they had  
 of God, but contradicted it in their  
 Lives, *holding the truth of God in un-*  
*righteousness.* And that he speaks here  
 of the Heathen, is plain from his fol-  
 lowing Discourse, and the Character  
 he gives of those Persons of whom he  
 was speaking, *who hold the truth of*  
*God in unrighteousness; because that*  
*which may be known of God is manifest in*  
*them, for God hath shewn it unto them;*  
 and this he proves, because those who  
 were destitute of Divine Revelation,  
 were not without all knowledge of  
 God, being led by the sight of this  
 visible World, to the knowledge of  
 an




an invisible Being and Power that was Ser. 10.  
the Author of it, ver. 20. 21. For the  
invisible things of him from the Creation  
of the World are clearly seen, being un-  
derstood by the things which are made,  
even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so  
that they are without excuse; because that  
when they knew God, they glorified him not  
as God. (*Hæc est summa delicti, nolle ag-  
noscere, quem ignorare non possis*, saith  
Tertullian to the Heathen; "This is  
"the height of thy fault, not to ac-  
"knowledge him, whom thou canst  
"not but know, not to own him, of  
"whom thou canst not be ignorant if  
"thou wouldst;) neither were thankful;  
they did not pay those acknowledg-  
ments to him which of right were due to  
the Author of their Being, and of all  
good things; but became vain in their ima-  
ginations; *ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν ταῖς διαλο-  
γισμῶσι αὐτῶν*, they were fool'd with their  
own Reasonings. This he speaks of the  
Philosophers, who in those great Argu-  
ments of the Being and Providence of  
God, the Immortality of the Soul, and the  
Rewards of another World, had lost the  
truth by too much subtlety about it,  
and

Vol. IV. and had disputed themselves into doubt  
 and uncertainty about those things  
 which were naturally known ; for  
*nimium altercando veritas amittitur ;*  
 “ Truth is many times lost by too  
 “ much Contention and Dispute about  
 “ it ; and by too eager a pursuit of it,  
 “ Men many times out-run it ; and leave  
 “ it behind ; ver. 22. *and professing them-*  
*selves to be Wise, they became Fools.* Men  
 never play the fools more, than by en-  
 deavouring to be over-subtle and wise ;  
 ver. 23. *and changed the glory of the in-*  
*corruptible God, into an Image made like*  
*to corruptible Man, and to Birds, four-*  
*footed Beasts, and creeping things ;* here  
 he speaks of the sottishness of their Ido-  
 latry, whereby they provoked God to  
 give them up to all manner of lewd-  
 ness and impurity , ver. 24. *wherefore*  
*God also gave them up unto uncleanness,*  
*through the lusts of their own hearts ;*  
 and again, ver. 26. *for this Cause*  
*God gave them up to vile affections ;* and  
 then he innumerares the abominable  
 Lusts and Vices they were guilty of,  
 notwithstanding their Natural acknow-  
 ledgment of the Divine Justice, ver.  
 32. *who*

32. who knowing the judgment of God, Ser. 10.  
 that they which commit such things are   
 worthy of death, not only do the same,  
 but have pleasure in them that do them.  
 By all which it appears that he speaks  
 of the Heathen, who offended against  
 the Natural Light of their own  
 Minds, and therefore were without ex-  
 cuse. *Quam sibi veniam sperare possunt*  
*impietatis suæ, qui non agnoscunt cultum*  
*eius, quem prorsus ignorari ab hominibus*  
*fas non est?* saith Lactantius, "How  
 "can they hope for pardon of their  
 "impiety, who deny to worship that  
 "God, of whom it is not possible Man-  
 "kind should be wholly ignorant?"

So that this is *To hold the truth in*  
*unrighteousness*, injuriously to suppress  
 it, and to hinder the power and ef-  
 ficacy of it upon our Minds and  
 Actions; for so the word *κατέχευ*  
 sometimes signifies, as well as *to hold*  
*fast*; and this every Man does, who  
 acts contrary to what he believes and  
 knows; he offers violence to the light  
 of his own Mind, and does injury to  
 the truth, and keeps that a Prisoner,  
 which

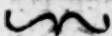
Vol.IV. which would set him free; ye shall  
 know the truth (says our Lord) and the  
truth shall make you free.

And this is one of the highest aggravations of the Sins of Men, to offend against Knowledge, and that light which God hath set up in every Man's Mind. If Men wander and stumble in the dark, it is not to be wondred at; many times it is unavoidable, and no care can prevent it: but in the light it is expected Men should look before them, and discern their way. That Natural Light which the Heathens had, tho' it was but comparatively dim and imperfect, yet the Apostle takes notice of it as a great aggravation of their Idolatrous and Abominable Practices. Those natural Notions which all Men have of God, if they had in any measure attended to them, and govern'd themselves by them, might have been sufficient to have preserved them from dishonouring the Deity, by *worshiping Creatures instead of God*; the common light of Nature was enough to have discovered  
to

to them the evil of those lewd and unnatural practices, which many of them were guilty of, but they *detained* and *suppressed the truth* most injuriously, and would not suffer it to have its natural and proper influence upon them; and this is that which left them *without excuse*; that from the light of Nature they had knowledge enough to have done better, and to have preserved them from those great Crimes which were so common among them.

And if this was so great an aggravation of the impiety and wickedness of the Heathen, and left them *without excuse*; what Apology can be made for the impiety and unrighteousness of Christians, who have so strong and clear a light to discover to them their duty, and the danger of neglecting it, to whom *the wrath of God is plainly revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men*? The Truths of the Gospel are so very clear and powerful, and such an improvement of Natural light, that Men must use great force and violence to suppress them, and to hinder the efficacy of them upon  
their



Vol.IV.  their lives. And this is a certain Rule, by how much the greater our Knowledge, by so much the less is our Excuse, and so much the greater Punishment is due to our faults. So our Lord hath told us, *Luke 12. 47. That Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. And John 9. 41. If ye were blind (says our Saviour to the Jews) ye should have no sin.* So much ignorance as there is of our Duty, so much abatement of the wilfulness of our faults: but if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more Sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of Judgment and fiery indignation, says the Apostle to the Hebrews, Chap. 10. 26, 27. *If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth; implying, that Men cannot pretend ignorance for their faults, after so clear a revelation of the will of God, as is made to Mankind by the Gospel.*

And upon this Consideration it is, that our Saviour doth so aggravate the impenitency and unbelief of the Jews, because

because it was in opposition to all the advantages of Knowledge, which can be imagined to be afforded to Mankind, *John 15. 22, 23, 24. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; that is, in Comparison their Sin had been much more excusable; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other Man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen, and hated both me, and my Father. How is that? Our Saviour means, that they had now sinned against all the advantages of knowing the Will of God, that Mankind could possibly have: at once opposing Natural Light, which was the dispensation of the Father; and the clearest revelation of God's Will, in the Dispensation of the Gospel by his Son; Now have they both seen and hated both Me and my Father.*

The two remaining Observations I shall reserve to another Opportunity.

SERMON

22

because it was in opposition to all the  
advantages of knowledge, which can  
be imagined to be attended to Man-  
kind, Jew as well as Gentile. If I had not  
come and spoke unto them, they had not  
known; that is, in Opposition their  
own had been much more extensible;  
but now they have no cloak for their sin.  
The first baptism, but my Father also.  
If I had not come among them, the works  
which none other than did, they had not  
known; but now have they both seen, and  
heard both me, and my Father. How is  
that? Our Saviour means, that they  
had now turned against all the advan-  
tages of knowing the Will of God, that  
Mankind could possibly have: no longer  
opposed Natural Light, which was  
the illumination of the Father; and the  
clearer revelation of God's Will in the  
Dispensation of the Gospel by his Son.  
Now have they both seen and heard both  
me and my Father.

The two remaining Opportunities I  
shall reserve to another Opportunity.

SERMON

# SERMON XI.

The Danger of all known Sin,  
both from the Light of Na-  
ture, and Revelation.

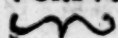
R O M. I. 18, 19.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from  
heaven, against all ungodliness and un-  
righteousness of men, who hold the  
truth in unrighteousness; because that  
which may be known of God is manifest  
in them, for God hath shewed it unto  
them.*

**I** Have handled *Four* of the Obser-  
vations which I rais'd from these  
Words, and shall now proceed to  
the other *Two* that remain.

X

*Fifth*



*Fifth Observation.* That the Natural Knowledge which Men have of God, if they live contrary to it, is a sufficient evidence of their holding the truth of God in unrighteousness. For the Reason why the Apostle chargeth them with this, is, *Because that which may be known of God is manifest, in that God hath shewed it unto them.*

There is a Natural Knowledge of God, and of the Duty we owe to him, which the Apostle calls τὸ πρῶτον τὸ Οὐδ, that of God which is obvious to be known by the light of Nature, and is as much as is absolutely necessary for us to know. There is something of God that is incomprehensible, and beyond the reach of our Understandings, but his Being and Essential Perfections may be known, which he calls his Eternal Power and Godhead; these he tells us are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, that is, the Creation of the World is a plain demonstration to Men, of the Being and Power of God; and if so, then God is naturally known to Men; the contrary whereof



whereof *Socinus* positively maintains Ser. 11.  
tho' therein he be forsaken by most of  
his Followers; an Opinion, in my  
Judgment, very unworthy of one,  
who, not without Reason, was esteem-  
ed so great a Master of Reason; and  
(tho' I believe he did not see it) und-  
ermining the strongest and surest  
Foundation of all Religion, which,  
when the Natural Notions of God are  
once taken away, will certainly want  
its best support. Besides that by de-  
nying any Natural Knowledge of God,  
and his Essential Perfections, he freely  
gives away one of the most plausible  
grounds of opposing the Doctrine of  
the Trinity. But because this is a Mat-  
ter of great Consequence, and he was  
a great Man, and is not to be confu-  
ted by contempt, but by better Rea-  
son, if it can be found; I will Consi-  
der his Reasons for this Opinion,  
and return a particular Answer to  
them.

*First*, He says that if the Knowledge  
of God were Natural, it would not be  
of Faith; but the Apostle says, that  
we must believe that heard. The force  
of which Arguments, if it have any,

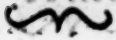
Vol. IV. lies in this, that the Object of Faith is  
 ~~~~~ Divine Revelation, and therefore we  
 cannot be said to *believe* what we *Nat-
 urally know*. The Schoolmen indeed
 say so; but the Scripture useth the
 word *Faith* more largely, for a *real
 perswasion* of any thing, whether
 grounded upon Sense, or Reason, or
 Divine Revelation. And our Saviour's
 Speech to *Thomas*, *Because thou hast seen,
 thou hast believed*, does sufficiently in-
 timate, that a Man may *believe* what
 he *sees*; and if so, what should hinder,
 but that a Man may be said to *believe*
 what he *Naturally knows*; that is, be
 really perswaded that there is a God
 from *Natural Light*?

Secondly, His next Argument is, be-
 cause the same Apostle concludes *Enoch*
 to have believed God, because he plea-
 sed God, and without *Faith* it is impos-
 sible to please him. From whence he
 says it is certain that Men may be
 without this Belief, which if it be
Natural they cannot. Indeed if the
 Apostle had said, that whoever be-
 lieves a God, must of necessity obey
 and please him, then the Inference
 had been good, that all Men do not
 Na-

Naturally believe a God, because it is certain they do not please him : but it is not good the other way, no more than if a Man should argue thus, that because whoever acts reasonably, must be endowed with Reason, therefore Men are not Naturally endowed with Reason. For as Men may Naturally be endowed with Reason, and yet not always make use of it; so Men may Naturally know and believe a God, and yet not be careful to please him. *Ser. 11.*

His *Third* Argument is, that the Scripture says that there are some that do not believe a God, for which he cites that of *David*, *The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God*; which certainly proves, that bad Men live so, as if they believed there were no God; nay, it may farther import, that they endeavour as much as they can, to stifle and extinguish the belief of a God in their Minds, and would gladly perswade themselves there is no God, because it is convenient for them there should be none; and whether *David* meant so or not, it is very probable that some may arrive to that

Vol. IV.



height of Impiety, as for a time at least; and in some moods, to disbelieve a God, and to be very confident of the Arguments on that side. But what then? Is the Knowledge and Belief of a God therefore not Natural to Mankind? Nature it self, as constant and uniform as it is, admits of some Irregularities, and Exceptions, in Effects that are meerly Natural, much more in those which have something in them that is voluntary, and depends upon the good or bad use of our Reason and Understanding; and there is no arguing from what is *Monstrous*, against what is *Natural*. It is Natural for Men to have five Fingers upon a Hand, and yet some are born otherwise; but in voluntary Agents, that which is Natural may be perverted, and in a great measure extinguish'd in some particular instances; so that there is no force at all in this Objection.

His *Fourth* and last Argument is, that there have not only been particular Persons, but whole Nations who have had no sense, nor so much as suspicion of a Deity. This I confess

The Knowledge of God Natural

III

were of great force, if it were true; See. III
and for the proof of this, he produ-
ceth the instance of *Brasil* in *America*.
But I utterly deny the matter of fact
and History, and challenge any Man
to bring good testimony, not only of
any Nation, but of any City in the
World, that ever were *professed Atheists*.
I know this was affirmed of some part
of *Brasil*, by some of the first Discou-
verers, who yet at the same time
owned, that these very People did most
expresly believe the Immortality of
the Soul, and the Rewards, and Pu-
nishments of another Life; Opinions
which no Man can well reconcile with
the denial and disbelief of a Deity.
But to put an end to this Argument,
later and more perfect discoveries have
found this not to be true, and do assure
us upon better acquaintance with those
barbarous People, that they are deeply
possess'd with the belief of One, *supream*
God, who made and governs the World.

Having thus given a particular An-
swer to Socinus his Arguments against
the Natural Knowledge of a God, I
will now briefly offer some Arguments

For

X 4

for

Vol. IV. for it. And to prove that the knowledge and belief of a God is natural to Mankind: My

First Argument shall be from the Universal Consent in this matter, of all Nations in all Ages. And this is an Argument of great force, there being no better way to prove any thing to be natural to any kind of Being, than if it be generally found in the whole Kind. *Omnium consensus naturæ vox est*, "the Consent of all is the voice of Nature, saith Tully. And indeed by what other Argument can we prove that Reason, and Speech, and an Inclination to Society are Natural to Men; but that these belong to the whole Kind?

Secondly, Unless the Knowledge of God and his Essential Perfections be Natural, I do not see what sufficient and certain foundation there can be of Revealed Religion. For unless we naturally know God to be a Being of all perfection, and consequently that whatever he says is true, I cannot see what Divine Revelation can signifie.

For

For God's revealing or declaring such a thing to us, is no necessary Argument that it is so, unless antecedently to this Revelation, we be possess'd firmly with this Principle, that whatever God says is true. And whatever is known antecedently to Revelation, must be known by Natural Light, and by Reasonings and Deductions from Natural Principles. I might further add to this Argument, that the only Standard and Measure to judge of Divine Revelations, and to distinguish between what are true, and what are counterfeit, are the Natural Notions which Men have of God, and of his Essential Perfections.

Ser. II.

Thirdly, If the Notion of a God be not Natural, I do not see how Men can have any Natural Notion of the difference of Moral Good and Evil, Just, and Unjust. For if I do not naturally know there is a God, how can I naturally know that there is any Law obliging to the one, and forbidding the other? all Law and Obligation to Obedience, necessarily supposing the Authority of a Superiour Being. But the

Vol. IV. the Apostle expressly asserts, that the Gentiles who were destitute of a Revealed Law, were a Law unto themselves; but there cannot be a Natural Law obliging Mankind, unless God be Naturally known to them.

And this Socinus himself in his Discourse upon this very Argument is forced to acknowledge. "In all Men (says he) there is Naturally a difference of Just, and Unjust; or at least there is planted in all Men an acknowledgment that Just ought to be preferr'd before Unjust; and that which is honest, before the contrary; and this is nothing else but the Word of God within a Man, which who-soever obeys, in so doing obeys God, tho' otherwise he neither know nor think there is a God; and there is no doubt but he that thus obeys, God, is accepted of him. So that here is an acknowledgment of a Natural Obligation to a Law, without any Natural Knowledge of a Superior Authority; which I think cannot be; and which is worse, that a Man may obey God acceptably, without knowing

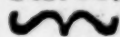
ing and believing there is a God; Ser. II.
which directly thwarts the ground of
his first Argument, from those words
of the Apostle, *Without Faith it is im-
possible to please God; for he that cometh
to God, that is, he that will be Reli-
gious and please God, must believe that
he is; so hard is it for any Man to
contradict Nature, without contradict-
ing himself.*

Fourthly, My last Argument
ground upon the words of the Apostle
in my Text, *That which may be known
of God, is manifest in them; for God hath
shewed it unto them. Is manifest in them,
or avowed among them,* God hath suffi-
ciently manifested it to Mankind. And
which way hath God done this? by
Revelation? or by the Natural Light
of Reason? He tells us at the 20th ver.
*For the invisible things of him from the
Creation of the World are clearly seen;*
that is, God, who in himself is invi-
sible, even since he hath Created the
World, hath given a visible Demon-
stration of himself; that is, of his Eter-
nal Power and Godhead, being understood by
the things which are made. The plain
sense

Vol.IV. sense of the whole is, that this wise and wonderful frame of the World, which cannot Reasonably be ascribed to any other Cause but God, is a sensible Demonstration to all Mankind, of an Eternal and Powerful Being that was the Author and Framers of it. The only Question now is, Whether this Text speak of the Knowledge of God by particular Revelation, or by Natural Light and Reason, from the contemplation of the Works of God ? *Socinus* having no other way to avoid the force of this Text, will needs understand it of the Knowledge of God by the Revelation of the Gospel. His words are these ; “ The Apostle therefore says in this place, that the Eternal Godhead of God, that is, that which God would always have us to do (for *the Godhead* is sometimes taken in this sense) and his Eternal Power, that is, his Promise which never fails, (in which sense he said a little before that the Gospel is the Power of God) these I say, which were never seen by Men, that is, were never known to them since the Creation of the World, are known by

“by his Works ; that is, by the wonderful Operation of God, and Divine Men , especially of Christ and his Apostles. These are his very words; and now I refer it to any indifferent Judgment, whether this be not a very forced and constrained Interpretation of this Text ; and whether that which I have before given, be not infinitely more free and natural , and every way more agreeable to the obvious sense of the words, and the scope of the Apostle’s Argument. For he plainly speaks of the *Heathen*, and proves them to be *inexcusable*, because *they held the truth in unrighteousness*, and having a Natural Knowledge of God, from the contemplation of his Works, and the things which are made, *they did not glorifie him as God*. And therefore I shall not trouble my self to give any other Answer to it ; for by the absurd violence of it in every part, it confutes it self more effectually than any Discourse about it can do.

Ser. II.



I have been the larger upon this, because it is a Matter of so great Consequence, and lies at the bottom of all Religion.

Vol. IV. Religion. For the Natural Knowledge which Men have of God, is, when all is done, the surest and fastest hold that Religion hath on Humane Nature. Besides, how should God judge that part of the World who are wholly destitute of Divine Revelation, if they had no Natural Knowledge of him, and consequently could not be under the direction and government of any Law? For where there is no Law, there is no Transgression; and where Men are guilty of the breach of no Law, they cannot be Judged and Condemned for it; for the Judgment of God is according to truth.

And now this being established, that Men have a Natural Knowledge of God; if they contradict it by their Life and Practice, they are guilty of detaining the truth of God in unrighteousness. For by this Argument the Apostle proves the Heathen to be guilty of holding the truth in unrighteousness, because notwithstanding the Natural Knowledge which they had of God, by the things which were made, they lived in the Religion

the practice of gross Idolatry, and the most abominable Sins and Vices. Ser. IV.

And this concerns us much more, who have the glorious Light of the Gospel added to the Light of Nature. For if they, who offended against the Light of Nature, were liable to the judgment of God, of how much sorer Punishment shall we be thought worthy, if we neglect those infinite advantages which the Revelation of the Gospel hath superadded to Natural Light. He hath now set our Duty in the clearest and strongest Light that ever was afforded to Mankind, so that if we will not now Believe and Repent, there is no Remedy for us, but we must die in our sins; if we sin wilfully, after so much knowledge of the truth, there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin; but a fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation to consume us.

The Summ of what hath been said on this Argument, is briefly this; that Men have a Natural Knowledge of God, and of those great Duties which result from the Knowledge of him;

Vol. IV. him; so that whatever Men say and pretend, as to the main things of Religion, *the Worship of God, and Justice and Righteousness toward Men*, setting aside Divine Revelation, we are all Naturally convinc'd of our Duty, and of what we ought to do, and those who live in a bad Course, need only be put in mind of what they naturally know, better than any Body else can tell them, that they are in a bad Course; so that I may appeal to all wicked Men from *themselves*, rash, and heated, and intoxicated with Pleasure and Vanity, transported and hurried away by Lust and Passion; to *themselves* serious and composed, and in a cool and considerate temper. And can any sober Man forbear to follow the Convictions of his own Mind, and to resolve to do what he inwardly consents to as best? Let us but be true to our selves, and obey the Dictates of our own Minds, and give leave to our own Consciences to Counsel us, and tell us what we ought to do, and we shall be a Law to our selves. I proceed to the

Sixth and last Observation, namely that the clear Revelation of the wrath of God in the Gospel, against the impiety and unrighteousness of Men, is one principal thing, which renders it so very powerful and likely a means for the Salvation of Mankind. For the Apostle instanceth in *two* things, which give the Gospel so great an advantage to this purpose, the Mercy of God to Penitent Sinners, and his Severity toward the Impenitent; both which are so fully and clearly revealed in the Gospel. *The Gospel is the power of God to Salvation, to every one that believeth, because therein the Righteousness of God is revealed; that is, his great Grace and Mercy in the Justification and Pardon of Sinners by Jesus Christ, which I have already shewn to be meant by the Righteousness of God, by comparing this with the Explication which is given of the Righteousness of God, Chap. 3. ver. 22.*

The other Reason which he gives of the Gospel's being *the power of God to Salvation*, is the plain declaration of the

Y

the

Vol. IV. the Severity of God toward Impenitent Sinners; *Because therein also the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men.* The force of which Argument will appear, if we consider these following Particulars.

First, That the Declarations of the Gospel in this Matter are so plain and express.

Secondly, That they are very dreadful, and terrible.

Thirdly, That there is no safety or hope of impunity for Men that go on and continue in their Sins.

Fourthly, That this Argument will take hold of the most desperate and profligate Sinners, and still retain its force upon the Minds of Men, when all other Considerations fail, and are of little or no efficacy. And,

Fifthly, That no Religion in the World can urge this Argument with that

that force and advantage that Christianity does. Ser. II.

First, That the declarations of the Gospel in this Matter, are most plain and expresse; and that not only against Sin and Wickedness in general, but against particular Sins and Vices; so that no Man that lives in any Evil and Vicious Course, can be ignorant of his danger. Our Lord hath told us in general, what shall be the Doom of the Workers of Iniquity, yea tho' they may have owned him, and made profession of his Name, *Mat 7. 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c. then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity. Math. 13. 49, 50. So shall it be at the end of the World, the Angels shall come forth and sever the Wicked from among the Just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire, there shall be wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Math. 25. 46. The Wicked shall go away*

Vol.IV. into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal. Joh. 5. 28, 29. The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation. Rom. 2. 6. St. Paul tells us that there is a Day of wrath, and of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God, who will render to every Man according to his deeds; to them who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of Man that doth evil. 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9. That the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power. Nothing can be more plain and express than these general declarations of the wrath of God against Sinners; that there is a Day of Judgment appointed, and a Judge constituted to take cognisance of the Actions of Men,
to

to pass a severe Sentence, and to inflict a terrible Punishment upon the workers of Iniquity. Ser. II.

More particularly our Lord and his Apostles have denounced the wrath of God against particular Sins and Vices. In several places of the New Testament, there are Catalogues given of particular Sins, the practice whereof will certainly shut Men out of the Kingdom of Heaven, and expose them to the wrath and vengeance of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *Know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* So likewise, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. *The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murthers, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like, of which I tell you before, as I have likewise told*

Vol. IV. you in times past, that they that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Col. 3. 5, 6. Mortifie therefore your Members upon Earth, Fornication, Uncleanness, Inordinate Affection, Evil Concupisence, and Covetousness, which is Idolatry, for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the Children of disobedience. Rev. 21. 8. The fearful and unbelieving, (that is, those who rejected the Christian Religion, notwithstanding the clear Evidence that was offered for it, and those who out of fear should Apostatize from it,) The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, (that is, those who were guilty of unnatural Lusts, not fit to be named) and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars (that is, all sorts of false and deceitful and perfidious Persons) shall have their part in the Lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

And not only these gross and notorious Sins, which are such plain violations of the Law and Light of Nature; but those wherein Mankind have been apt to take more liberty, as if they were

were not sufficiently convinced of the evil of them; as *the resisting of Civil Authority*, which the Apostle tells us, they that are guilty of, *shall receive to themselves damnation*, Rom. 13. 2. *Profane Swearing in common Conversation*, which St. James tells us brings Men under the danger of damnation, Ch. 5. 12. *Above all things, my Brethren, swear not, lest ye fall under Condemnation.* Nay, our Saviour hath told us plainly, that not only for wicked actions, but for every evil and sinful word, Men are obnoxious to the Judgment of God. So our Lord assures us, Mat. 12. 36, 37. *I say unto you, that every idle word that Men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* He had spoken before of that great and unpardonable Sin of *Blaspheming the Holy Ghost*; and because this might be thought great severity for evil words, he declares the Reason more fully, because words shew the Mind and Temper of the Man, ver. 34. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* "The Character of the Man

Vol. IV. "is shewn by his words, saith Menander. *Profert enim mores plerumque oratio* (saith Quintilian) *& animi secreta detegit*; "A Man's Speech discovers his Manners, and the secrets of his heart; *ut vivit etiam quemque dicere*, "Men commonly speak as they live; and therefore our Saviour adds, *A good Man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil Man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things: but I say unto you, that every idle word, πᾶν ῥήμα ἀπὸ τοῦ* by which I do not think our Saviour means, that Men shall be call'd to a solemn account at the Day of Judgment, for every trifling and impertinent and unprofitable word, but every wicked and sinful word of any kind; as if he had said, do you think this severe to make words an unpardonable fault? I say unto you, that Men shall not only be condemned for their malicious and blasphemous speeches against the Holy Ghost; but they shall likewise give a strict account for all other wicked and sinful speeches in any kind tho' much inferiour to this. And this is not only most agreeable to the scope of

of our Saviour, but is confirmed by Ser. 11. some Greek Copies, in which it is *πᾶν ῥῆμα πορνῶν*, every wicked word which Men shall speak, they shall be accountable for it at the Day of Judgment. But this by the by.

Our Saviour likewise tells us, that Men shall not only be proceeded against for Sins of Commission, but for the bare Omission and Neglect of their Duty, especially in Works of Mercy and Charity; for *not feeding the hungry*, and the like, as we see, *Mat. 25.* and that for the Omission of these, he will pass that terrible Sentence, *Depart ye Cursed, &c.* So that it nearly concerns us to be careful of our whole Life, of all our Words and Actions, since the Gospel hath so plainly and expressly declared, that *for all these things God will bring us into Judgment.* And if the threatnings of the Gospel be true, *What manner of Persons ought we to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness?*

Secondly, As the threatnings of the Gospel are very plain and express, so are they likewise very dreadful and terrible.

Vol.IV. terrible. I want words to express the least part of the terrour of them; and yet the expressions of Scripture concerning the misery and punishment of Sinners in another World, are such as may justly raise amazement and horror in those that hear them. Sometimes it is express'd by *a departing from God*, and a perpetual banishment from *his presence*, who is the Fountain of all Comfort, and Joy, and Happiness; sometimes by *the loss of our Souls*, or *our selves*. *What shall it profit a Man to gain the whole World and lose his own Soul?* Or, (as it is in another Evangelist) *to lose himself?* Not that our Being shall be destroyed; that would be a happy loss indeed, to him that is Sentenced to be for ever miserable; but the Man shall still remain, and his Body and Soul continue to be the Foundation of his misery, and a Scene of perpetual woe and discontent, which our Saviour calls *the destroying of Body and Soul in Hell*, or *going into everlasting punishment*, where there shall be *wailing and gnashing of teeth*, where *the worm dies not*, and *the fire is not quenched*. Could I represent to you the horror of that

that dismal Prison, into which Wicked and Impure Souls are to be thrust, and the misery they must there endure, without the least spark of Comfort, or glimering of Hope, how they wail and groan under the intolerable wrath of God, the insolent scorn and cruelty of Devils, the severe lashes and stings, the raging anguish and horrible despair of their own minds, without intermission, without pity, and without hope of ever seeing an end of that misery, which yet is unsupportable for one moment; could I represent these things to you according to the terror of them, what effect must they have upon us? and with what patience could any Man bear to think of plunging himself into this misery? and by his own wilful fault and folly to endanger his *coming into this place and state of torments*? Especially if we consider in the

Third place, that the Gospel hath likewise declared, that there is no avoiding of this misery, no hopes of impunity, if Men go on and continue in their Sins. The terms of the Gospel in this are peremptory, that *except we Repent,*
we

Vol. IV. *we shall perish; that without holiness, no Man shall see the Lord; that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. And this is a very pressing Consideration, and brings the Matter to a short and plain issue. Either we must leave our Sins, or die in them; either we must Repent of them, or be Judged for them; either we must forsake our Sins, and break off that wicked Course which we have lived in, or we must quit all hopes of Heaven and Happiness, nay we cannot escape the damnation of Hell. The clear revelation of a future Judgment is so pressing an Argument to Repentance, as no Man can in Reason resist, that hath not a mind to be miserable. Now (saith St. Paul to the Athenians) he straightly chargeth all Men every where to Repent, because he hath appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness.*

Men may cheat themselves, or suffer themselves to be deluded by others, about several means and devices of reconciling a wicked Life, with the hopes of Heaven and Eternal Salvation; as by mingling some pangs of sorrow for Sin,

Sin, and some hot Fits of Devotion with a sinful Life; which is only the interruption of a wicked Course, without Reformation and amendment of Life: but *let no Man deceive you with vain words*; for our Blessed Saviour hath provided no other ways to save Men, but upon the terms of Repentance, and Obedience. Ser. II.

Fourthly, This Argument takes hold of the most desperate and profligate Sinners, and still retains its force upon the Minds of Men, when almost all other Considerations fail, and have lost their efficacy upon us. Many Men are gone so far in an Evil Course, that neither shame of their Vices, nor the love of God and Virtue, nor the hopes of Heaven are of any force with them, to reclaim them, and bring them to a better Mind: but there is one handle yet left, whereby to lay hold of them, and that is their *Fear*. This is a Passion that lies deep in our Nature, being founded in self-preservation, and sticks so close to us, that we cannot quit ourselves of it, nor shake it off. Men may put off ingenuity, and break thro' all

Vol. IV. all Obligations of gratitude. Men may
 ~~~~~ harden their Foreheads, and Conquer  
 all sense of shame: but they can never  
 perfectly stifle and subdue their *Fears*;  
 they can hardly so extinguish *the fear of*  
*Hell*, but that some sparks of that Fire  
 will ever and anon be flying about in  
 their Consciences, especially when they  
 are made sober, and brought to them-  
 selves by affliction, and by the present  
 apprehensions of Death, have a nearer  
 sight of another World. And if it was  
 so hard for the Heathen to Conquer  
 these apprehensions, how much harder  
 must it be to Christians, who have so  
 much greater assurance of these things,  
 and to whom *the wrath of God is so*  
*clearly revealed from Heaven, against all*  
*ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men?*

~~~~~ *Fifthly*, No Religion in the World  
 ever urged this Argument upon Men,
 with that force and advantage which
 Christianity does. The Philosophy of
 the Heathen gave Men no steady assu-
 rance of the thing; the most knowing
 Persons among them were not agreed
 about a Future State; the greatest part
 of them spake but doubtfully concern-
 ing

ing another Life. And besides the Ser. II.
natural jealousies and suspicions of
Mankind concerning these things, they
had only some fair probabilities of Reason, and the Authority of their Poets, who talkt they knew not what about *the Elizian Fields*, and *the Infernal Regions*, and *the three Judges of Hell*; so that the Wisest among them, had hardly assurance enough in themselves of the truth of the thing, to press it upon others with any great confidence, and therefore it was not likely to have any great efficacy upon the generality of Mankind.

As for the Jewish Religion, tho' that supposed and took for granted the Rewards of another World, as a Principle of Natural Religion; yet in the Law of *Moses* there was no particular and exprefs Revelation of the Life of the World to come; and what was deduced from it, was by remote and obscure Consequence. Temporal Promises and Threatnings it had many and clear, and their Eyes were so dazzled with these, that it is probable that the generality of them did but little consider

Vol. IV. *under a Future State, 'till they fell into great temporal Calamities under the Grecian and Roman Empires, whereby they were almost necessarily awakened to the Consideration and Hopes of a better Life, to relieve them under their present Evils and Sufferings; and yet even in that time they were divided into two great Factions about this Matter, the one affirming, and the other as confidently denying any Life after this. But the Gospel hath brought Life and Immortality to light, and we are assured from Heaven of the truth and reality of another State, and a Future Judgment. The Son of God was sent into the World to preach this Doctrine, and rose again from the Dead, and was taken up into Heaven, for a visible demonstration to all Mankind of another Life after this, and consequently of a Future Judgment, which no Man ever doubted of, that did firmly believe a Future State.*

The Sum of all that I have said is this; the Gospel hath plainly declared to us, that the only way to Salvation is by forsaking our Sins, and living a Holy and Virtuous Life; and the most effectual

effectual Argument in the World to Ser. ix.
 persuade Men to this, is the consideration of the infinite danger that a sinful Course exposeth Men to, since *the wrath of God* continually hangs over Sinners, and if they continue in their Sins, will certainly fall upon them, and overwhelm them with Misery, and he that is not moved by this Argument, is lost to all intents and purposes.

All that now remains, is to urge this Argument upon Men, and from the serious Consideration of it, to persuade them to Repent, and reform their wicked Lives. And was there ever Age wherein this was more needful? when *Iniquity doth* not only *abound*, but even *rage* among us; when Infidelity and Profaneness, and all manner of Lewdness and Vice appears so boldly and openly, and Men commit the greatest Abominations without blushing at them; when Vice hath got such head that it can hardly bear to be checkt and controll'd, and when, as the Roman Historian complains of his times, *Ad ea tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est*; "things are come to that pass, that

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"we

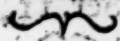
Vol. IV. *“we can neither bear our Vices, nor
 the Remedies of them. Our Vices are
 grown to a prodigious and intolerable
 height, and yet Men hardly have the
 patience to hear of them; and surely
 a Disease is then dangerous indeed,
 when it cannot bear the severity that
 is necessary to a Cure. But yet, not-
 withstanding this, we who are the Mes-
 sengers of God to Men, to warn them
 of their sin and danger, must not keep
 silence, and spare to tell them both of
 their sins, and of the Judgment of God
 which hangs over them; that God will
 visit for these things, and that his Soul
 will be avenged on such a Nation as this.
 At least we may have leave to warn o-
 thers, who are not yet run to the same
 excess of riot, to save themselves from this
 untoward generation. God's Judgments are
 abroad in the Earth, and call aloud upon
 us, to learn Righteousness.*

But this is but a small Consideration,
 in Comparison of the Judgment of ano-
 ther World, which we who call our
 selves Christians, do profess to believe,
 as one of the Chief Articles of our Faith.
 The Consideration of this should check
 and cool us in the heat of all our sin-
 ful

ful Pleasures; and that bitter Irony of Ser. 11.

*Solomon should cut us to the heart; Re-
joyce O young Man in thy youth, and let
thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,
and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in
the sight of thine eyes; but know, that for
all these things God will bring thee into
judgment. Think often and seriously on
that time, wherein the wrath of God,
which is now revealed against sin, shall be
executed upon Sinners; and if we believe
this, we are strangely stupid and obsti-
nate, if we be not moved by it. The
assurance of this made St. Paul ex-
treamly importunate in exhorting Men
to avoid so great a danger. 2 Cor. 5.
10, 11. We must all appear before the
Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one
may receive the things done in the Body, ac-
cording to what he hath done, whether it be
good, or evil. Knowing therefore the terrors
of the Lord, we perswade Men. And if this
ought to move us to take so great a care
of others, much more of our selves. The
Judgment to come is a very amazing
Consideration, it is a fearful thing to
hear of it, but it will be much more
terrible to see it, especially to those
whose guilt must needs make them so
heartily concern'd in the dismal Confe-*

Vol. IV.



quences of it; and yet as sure as I stand, and you sit here, *this great and terrible Day of the Lord will come, and who may abide his coming!* What will we do, when that Day shall surprize us careless and unprepared! what unspeakable horror and amazement will then take hold of us! when *lifting up our eyes to Heaven, we shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of it, with Power, and great Glory;* when that powerful voice which shall pierce the ears of the Dead shall ring through the World, *Arise ye Dead, and come to Judgment;* when the mighty *Trumpet* shall sound, and wake the Sleepers of a thousand years, and summon the dispersed parts of the Bodies of all Men that ever lived, to rally together and take their place; and the Souls and Bodies of Men which have been so long strangers to one another, shall meet and be united again, to receive the doom due to their deeds; what fear shall then surprize Sinners, and how will they tremble at the presence of the great Judge, and *for the glory of his Maiesty!* How will their Consciences fly in their Faces, and their own hearts condemn them, for their wicked and ungodly Lives, and even prevent that Sentence which yet shall

shall certainly be past and executed upon them. But I will proceed no further in this Argument, which hath so much of terror in it. Ser. II.

I will conclude my Sermon, as Solomon doth his *Ecclesiastes*, Ch. 12. 13, 14. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man; for God shall bring every work into Judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* To which I will only add that serious and merciful Admonition of a *greater than Solomon*, I mean the great Judge of the whole World, our blessed Lord and Saviour, *Luke 21. 34, 35, 36.* *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this Life, and so that day come upon you at unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole Earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man; To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, &c.*

SERMON XII.

Knowledge and Practice Ne-
cessary in Religion.

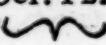
JOHN XIII. 17.

*If ye know these things, happy are ye if
ye do them.*

TWO Things make up Reli-
gion, the *Knowledge*, and the
Practice of it; and the *First* is
wholly in order to the *Second*; and
God hath not revealed to us the
Knowledge of himself and his Will,
meerly for the improvement of our
Understanding, but for the bettering
of our Hearts and Lives; not to enter-
tain our Minds with the speculations
of Religion and Virtue, but to form
Z 4 and

Vol.IV. and govern our Actions. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

In which words, our blessed Saviour does from a particular instance take occasion to settle a general Conclusion, namely, that Religion doth mainly consist in Practice, and that the knowledge of his Doctrine, without the real effects of it upon our Lives, will bring no Man to Heaven. In the beginning of this Chapter, our great Lord and Master, to testifie his Love to his Disciples, and to give them a lively Instance and Example of that great Virtue of Humility, is pleased to condescend to a very low and mean Office, such as was used to be performed by Servants to their Masters, and not by the Master to his Servants; namely, to wash their feet; and when he had done this, he asks them if they did understand the meaning of this strange Action. *Know ye what I have done unto you? ye call me Master, and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought*

to wash one anothers feet ; for I have Ser. 12.
given you an Example, that ye should do as I 
have done to you. Verily, verily, I say un-
to you, the Servant is not greater than
the Lord, neither he that is sent, greater
than he that sent him ; if ye know these
things, happy are ye if ye do them. As
if he had said, This which I have now
done, is easie to be understood, and so
likewise are all those other Christian
Graces and Virtues, which I have
heretofore by my Doctrine and Ex-
ample recommended to you ; but it
is not enough to *know* these things,
but ye must likewise *do* them. The
End and the Life of all our Know-
ledge in Religion, is to put in practice
what we know. It is necessary in-
deed that we should know our Duty,
but Knowledge alone will never bring
us to that Happiness, which Religion
designs to make us partakers of, if our
Knowledge have not its due and pro-
per influence upon our Lives. Nay,
so far will our Knowledge be from
making us Happy, if it be separated
from the Virtues of a good Life, that
it will prove one of the heaviest aggra-
vations

Vol.IV. vations of our misery; and it is as if
 he had said, *if ye know these things, wo
 be unto you, if ye do them not.*

From these words then, I shall observe these *three* things, which I shall speak but briefly to.

First, That the Knowledge of God's Will, and our Duty, is necessary to the practice of it; *If ye know these things*, which supposeth that we must *know* our Duty, before we can *do* it.

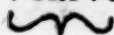
Secondly, That the knowledge of our Duty, and the Practice of it, may be, and too often are separated. This likewise the Text supposeth, that Men may *know* their Duty, and yet not do it, and that this is very frequent, which is the Reason why our Saviour gives this Caution.

Thirdly, That the Practice of Religion, and the doing of what we know to be our Duty, is the only way to Happiness; *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* I begin with the

First

First of these, namely, That the Knowledge of God's Will and our Duty, is necessary in order to the Practice of it. The truth of this Proposition is so clear and evident at first view, that nothing can obscure it, and bring it in question, but to endeavour to prove it; and therefore instead of spending time in that, I shall take occasion from it, justly to reprove that preposterous Course which is taken, and openly avowed and justified by some, as the safest and best way to make Men Religious, and to bring them to Happiness; namely, by taking away from them the Means of Knowledge; as if the best way to bring Men to *do the Will of God*, were to keep them from *knowing it*. For what else can be the meaning of that Maxim so current in the Church of *Rome*, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*? or of that strange and injurious practice of theirs, of Locking up from the People that great Storehouse and Treasury of Divine Knowledge, *the Holy Scriptures*, in an unknown Tongue?

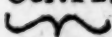
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I know very well, that in justification of this hard usage of their People, it is pretended that Knowledge is apt to puff Men up, to make them Proud and Contentious, Refractory and Disobedient, and Heretical, and what not, and particularly, that the free and familiar use of the Holy Scriptures permitted to the People, hath ministred occasion to the People, of falling into great and dangerous Errors, and of making great disturbance and divisions among Christians. For answer to this pretence, I desire these *four or five* things may be Considered.

First, That unless this be the *Natural* and *Necessary* effect of Knowledge in Religion, and of the free use of the Holy Scriptures, there is no force in this Reason; and if this be the *proper* and *natural* effect of this Knowledge then this Reason will reach a great way farther, than those who make use of it are willing it should.

Secondly, That this is not the *natural* and *necessary* effect of Knowledge in Re-

Religion, but only *accidental*, and proceeding from Men's abuse of it; for which the thing it self is not to be taken away. Ser. 12. 

Thirdly, That the proper and natural Effects and Consequences of *Ignorance*, are equally pernicious, and much more certain and unavoidable, than those which are accidentally occasioned by *Knowledge*.

Fourthly, That if this Reason be good, it is much stronger for withholding the Scriptures from the Priests and the Learned, than from the People.

Fifthly, That this danger was as great, and as well known in the Apostles times, and yet they took a quite contrary Course.

First, I desire it may be consider'd, that unless this be the *natural* and *necessary* effect of Knowledge in Religion, and of the free use of the Holy Scriptures, there is no force in this Reason; for that which is *necessary*, or *highly useful*,

Vol.IV. *useful*, ought not to be taken away, because it is liable to be perverted, and abused to ill purposes. If it ought, then not only Knowledge in Religion, but all other Knowledge ought to be restrained and suppress; for all Knowledge is apt to *puff up*, and liable to be abused to many ill purposes. At this rate, Light, and Liberty, and Reason, yea and Life it self, ought all to be taken away, because they are all greatly abused by many Men, to some ill purposes or other; so that unless these ill effects do *naturally* and *necessarily* spring from Knowledge in Religion, the Objection from them is of no force; and if they do necessarily flow from it, then this Reason will reach a great way further than those that make use of it are willing it should; for if this be true, that the Knowledge of Religion, as it is Revealed in the Holy Scriptures, is *of its own Nature* so pernicious, as to make Men proud and Contentious, and Heretical, and Disobedient to Authority, then the blame of all this would fall upon our blessed Saviour, for revealing so pernicious a Doctrine, and upon his Apostles, for pub-

publishing this Doctrine in a known Ser. 12.
Tongue to all Mankind, and thereby
laying the Foundation of perpetual
Schisms and Heresies in the Church.

Secondly, But this is not the *natural*
and *necessary* effect of Knowledge in
Religion, but only *accidental*, and pro-
ceeding from Mens abuse of it, for
which the thing it self ought not to
be taken away. And thus much cer-
tainly they will grant, because it can-
not with any face be denied; and if
so, then the Means of Knowledge are
not to be denied, but only Men are to
be cautioned not to pervert and abuse
them. And if any Man abuse the
Holy Scriptures to the Patronizing of
Error or Heresie, or to any other bad
purpose, he does it at his peril, and
must give an account to God for it,
but ought not to be deprived of the
means of Knowledge, for fear he
should make an ill use of them. We
must not hinder Men from being *Chri-*
stians, to preserve them from being
Hereticks; and put out Mens Eyes, for
fear they should some time or other
take

Vol. IV. take upon them to dispute their way
 with their Guides.

I remember that St. Paul, 1 Cor. 8. 1. take notice of this *accidental* inconvenience of *Knowledge*, that it *puffeth up*, and that this Pride occasioned great Contentions and Divisions among them: but the Remedy which he prescribes against this mischief of Knowledge, is not to withhold from Men the Means of it, and to Celebrate the Service of God, the Prayers of the Church, and the Reading of the Scriptures *in an unknown Tongue*, but quite contrary, Chap. 14. of that Epistle, he strictly enjoyns that the Service of God in the Church be so performed, as may be for the *edification* of the People, which he says cannot be, if it be Celebrated *in an unknown Tongue*; and the Remedy he prescribes against the *accidental* mischief and inconvenience of Knowledge, is not *Ignorance*; but *Charity*, to govern their Knowledge, and to help them to make a right use of it; ver. 20. of that Chapt. after he had declared that the Service of God ought to be performed *in a known Tongue*,

Tongue, he immediately adds, *Brethren* Ser. 12.
be not Children in understanding; how-
beit in malice be ye Children, but in un-
derstanding be ye Men. He commends
 Knowledge, he encourageth it, he re-
 quires it of all Christians; so far is he
 from checking the pursuit of it, and
 depriving the People of the Means of
 it. And indeed there is nothing in
 the Christian Religion, but what is fit
 for every Man to know, because there
 is nothing in it, but what is designed
 to promote Holiness, and a good Life;
 and if Men make any other use of their
 Knowledge, it is their own fault, for
 it certainly tends to make Men good;
 and being so useful and necessary to so
 good a purpose, Men ought not to be
 debarr'd of it.

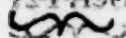
Thirdly, Let it be Consider'd, that
 the *proper* and *natural* Effects and Con-
 sequences of *ignorance* are equally per-
 nicious, and much more certain and
 unavoidable, than those which are *ac-*
centually occasioned by *Knowledge*; for
 so far as a Man is ignorant of his Duty,
 it is impossible he should do it. He
 that hath the Knowledge of Religion,

A a

may

Vol. IV. may be a bad Christian, but he that is
 ~~~~~ destitute of it, can be none at all. Or if  
 Ignorance do beget and promote some  
 kind of Devotion in Men, it is such a  
 Devotion as is not properly *Religion*,  
 but *Superstition*; the ignorant Man  
 may be zealously *superstitious*, but with-  
 out some measure of Knowledge, no  
 Man can be *truly Religious*. *That the*  
*Soul be without Knowledge it is not good,*  
*says Solomon, Prov. 19. 2.* because good  
 practices depend upon our Knowledge,  
 and must be directed by it; when as a  
 Man that is trained up only to the  
 outward performance of some things  
 in Religion, as to the saying over so  
 many Prayers in an unknown Tongue,  
 this Man cannot be *truly Religious*, be-  
 cause nothing is *Religious*, that is not  
 a *Reasonable Service*; and no Service  
 can be *Reasonable*, that is not directed  
 by our *Understandings*. Indeed, if the  
 end of Prayer were only to give God to  
 understand what we want, it were all  
 one what Language we Prayed in, and  
 whether we understood what we asked  
 of him or not: but so long as the end  
 of Prayer is to testify the sense of our  
 own wants, and of our dependance  
 upon

upon God for the supply of them, it is impossible that any Man should in any tolerable propriety of Speech be said to *Pray*, who does not understand what he asks; and the saying over so many *Pater Nosters* by one that does not understand the meaning of them, is no more a *Prayer*, than the repeating over so many Verses in *Virgil*. And if this were good Reasoning, that Men must not be permitted to know so much as they can in Religion, for fear they should grow troublesome with their Knowledge, then certainly the best way in the World to maintain Peace in the Christian Church, would be to let the People know nothing at all in Religion; and the best way to secure the ignorance of the People would be to keep the Priests as ignorant as the People, and then to be sure they could teach them nothing: but then the mischief would be, that out of a fondness to maintain Peace in the Christian Church, there would be no Church, nor no Christianity; which would be the same wise Contrivance, as if a Prince should destroy his Subjects, to keep his Kingdom quiet.



*Fourthly*, Let us likewise Consider, that if this Reason be good, it is much stronger for withholding the Scriptures from the Priests, and the Learned, than from the People; because the danger of starting Errors and Heresies, and Countenancing them from Scripture, and managing them plausibly and with advantage, is much more to be feared from the Learned, than from the Common People; and the Experience of all Ages hath shewn, that the great Broachers and Abettors of Heresie in the Christian Church, have been Men of Learning and Wit; and most of the famous Heresies, that are Recorded in Ecclesiastical History, have their Names from some Learned Man or other; so that it is a great mistake to think that the way to prevent Error and Heresie in the Church, is to take the Bible out of the hands of the People, so long as the free use of it is permitted to Men of Learning and Skill, in whose hands the danger of perverting it is much greater. The Ancient Fathers, I am sure, do frequently prescribe to the People the constant and careful reading of



of the Holy Scriptures, as the surest Antidote against the Poyson of dangerous Errors, and damnable Heresies; and if there be so much danger of seduction into Error from the Oracles of Truth, by what other or better Means can we hope to be secured against this danger? If *the Word of God* be so cross and improper a Means to this End, one would think that the *teachings of Men* should be much less effectual; so that Men must either be left in their ignorance, or they must be permitted to learn from *the word of truth*; and whatever force this Reason of the danger of Heresie hath in it, to deprive the Common People of the use of the Scriptures, I am sure it is much stronger to wrest them out of the hands of the Priests and the Learned, because they are much more capable of perverting them to so bad a purpose.

*Fifthly*, and lastly, this danger was as great and visible in the Age of the Apostles, as it is now; and yet they took a quite contrary Course; there were Heresies then, as well as now, and either the Scriptures were not

Vol. IV. thought by being in the hands of the People to be the Cause of them, or they did not think the taking of them out of their hands a proper Remedy. The Apostles in all their Epistles, do earnestly Exhort the People to grow in Knowledge, and commend them for searching the Scriptures, and charge them that the word of God should dwell richly in them. And St. Peter takes particular notice of some Men wresting some difficult passages in St. Paul's Epistles, as likewise in the other Scriptures, to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3. 16. where speaking of St. Paul's Epistles; he says *there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.* Here the Danger Objected is taken notice of; but the Remedy prescribed by St. Peter, is not to take from the People the use of the Scriptures, and to keep them in ignorance; but after he had cautioned against the like weakness and errors, he exhorts them to grow in Knowledge, ver. 17, 18, *Ye therefore, Beloved, seeing ye know these things before* (that is, seeing ye are so plainly

plainly told and warned of this danger) *beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* (that is, of the Christian Religion;) believing, it seems, that the more knowledge they had in Religion, the less they would be in danger of falling into damnable Errors. I proceed to the

Ser. 12.

*Second Observation, viz. That the Knowledge of our Duty, and the Practice of it, may and often are separated. This likewise is supposed in the Text, that Men may, and often do know the Will of God, and their Duty, and yet fail in the Practice of it. Our Saviour elsewhere supposeth, that many know their Master's Will, who do not do it; and he compares those that hear his Sayings, and do them not, to a foolish Man that built his house upon the sand. And St. James speaks of some, who are hearers of the word only, but not doers of it, and for that Reason fall short of Happiness. And this is no wonder, because the attaining to that knowledge of Religion*

Vol. IV. which is necessary to Salvation is no difficult task. A great part of it is written in our hearts, and we cannot be ignorant of it if we would; as that there is a God, and a Providence, and another State after this Life, wherein we shall be Rewarded, or Punished, according as we have lived here in this World; that God is to be Worshipped, to be Prayed to for what we want, and to be Praised for what we enjoy. Thus far Nature instructs Men in Religion, and in the great Duties of Morality, as Justice, and Temperance, and the like. And as for Revealed Religion, as that Jesus Christ the Son of God came in our Nature to save us, by revealing our Duty more clearly and fully to us, by giving us a more perfect Example of Holiness and Obedience in his own Life and Conversation, and by dying for our Sins, and rising again for our Justification; these are things which Men may easily understand; and yet for all that, they are difficultly brought to the Practice of Religion.

I shall instance in three sorts of Persons, in whom the *knowledge* of Religion

gion is more remarkably separated Ser. 12.  
from the *Practice* of it; and for distinction sake, I may call them by these three Names; the *Speculative*, the *Formal*, and the *Hypocritical* Christian. The first of these makes Religion only a *Science*, the second takes it up for a *Fashion*, the third makes some *Worldly advantage* of it, and serves some *secular Interest* and *Design* by it. All these are upon several accounts concerned to understand something of Religion; but yet will not be brought to the Practice of it.

The *first* of these whom I call the *Speculative* Christian, is he who makes Religion only a *Science*, and studies it as a piece of Learning, and part of that general knowledge in which he affects the reputation of being a Master; he hath no design to practise it, but he is loth to be ignorant of it, because the knowledge of it is a good Ornament of Conversation, and will serve for Discourse and Entertainment among those who are disposed to be grave and serious; and because he does not intend to practise it, he passeth over those things



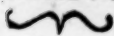
Vol. IV. things which are plain and easie to be understood, and applies himself chiefly to the Consideration of those things which are more abstruse, and will afford Matter of Controversie and subtle Dispute, as the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, *Predestination*, *Freewill*, and the like. Of this temper seem many of the School-Men of old to have been, who made it their great study and business to puzzle Religion, and to make every thing in it intricate, by starting infinite questions and difficulties about the plainest truths; and of the same rank usually are the Heads and Leaders of Parties and Factions in Religion, who by needless Controversies, and endless Disputes about some thing or other, commonly of no great moment in Religion, hinder themselves and others from minding the Practice of the great and substantial Duties of a good Life.

*Secondly*, There is the *Formal Christian*, who takes up Religion for a *Fashion*. He is born and bred in a Nation where Christianity is profest, and Countenanced, and therefore thinks it con-

convenient for him to know something of it. Of this sort there are, I fear, a great many, who read the Scriptures sometimes as others do, to know the History of it; and go to Church, and hear the Gospel Preached, and by this means come in some measure to understand the History of our Saviour, and the Christian Doctrine; but do not at all bend themselves to comply with the great End and Design of it; they do not heartily endeavour to form and fashion their Lives according to the Laws and Precepts of it; they think they are very good Christians, if they can give an account of the Articles of their Faith, profess their Belief in God and Christ, and declare that they hope to be Saved by him, tho' they take no care to keep his Commandments. These are they of whom our Saviour speaks, Luk. 6. 46. *who call him, Lord, Lord; but do not the things which he said.*

Ser. 12.

*Thirdly, Hypocritical Christians, who make an interest of Religion, and serve some worldly design by it. These are concerned to understand Religion more than ordinary, that they may counter-*  
feit

Vol. IV.  feit it handsomely, and may not be at a loss when they have occasion to put on the garb of it. And this is one part of the Character which the Apostle gives of those Persons, who he foretels would appear in the last days, *2 Tim. 3. 2.* he says they should be *Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Heady, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God, having a form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it.*

Now these Men do not love Religion, but they have occasion to make use of it; and therefore they will have no more of it than will just serve their Purpose and Design. And indeed he that hath any other Design in Religion than to please God, and save his Soul, needs no more than so much knowledge of it, as will serve him *to act a part* in it upon occasion. I come to the

*Third and last Observation, viz. That the Practice of Religion, and the doing of what we know to be our Duty, is the only way to Happiness; If ye know these things, happy are ye if do them;*

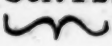
*them ; not if ye know these things happy* Ser. 12.  
*are ye ; but if ye know and do them.* Now  
to convince Men of so important a  
Truth, I shall endeavour to make out  
these two things :

*First*, That the Gospel makes the  
*Practice* of Religion a necessary Condi-  
tion of our Happiness.

*Secondly*, That the Nature and Rea-  
son of the thing makes it a necessary  
Qualification for it.

*First*, The Gospel makes the *Prac-  
tice* of Religion a necessary Condi-  
tion of our Happiness. Our Saviour in  
his first Sermon, where he repeats the  
Promise of Blessedness so often, he  
makes no promise of it to the *meer  
knowledge* of Religion, but to the *Ha-  
bit and Practice* of Christian Graces  
and Virtues, of *Meekness*, and *Humi-  
lity*, and *Mercifulness*, and *Righteousness*,  
and *Peaceableness*, and *Purity*, and *Pa-  
tience under sufferings and Persecutions  
for Righteousness sake.* And *Matth. 7. 2.*  
our Saviour doth most fully declare,  
that the happiness which he promises,  
did

Vol.IV. did not belong to those who made  
 ~~~~~ profession of his Name, and were so  
 well acquainted with his Doctrine, as
 to be able to instruct others, if them-
 selves in the mean time did not pra-
 ctise it; *Not every one that saith unto*
me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the King-
dom of Heaven; but he that doth the will
of my Father which is in Heaven. Ma-
ny will say unto me in that day, Lord,
Lord, have we not Prophefied in thy Name,
and in thy Name cast out Devils, and
done many wondrous works? and then will
I profess unto them, I never knew you,
depart from me ye workers of Iniquity:
 Tho' they profess to know him, yet
 because their Lives were not answerable
 to the Knowledge which they had
 of him, and his Doctrine, he declares
 that *he will not know them*, but bid them
depart from him. And then he goes on
 to shew, that tho' a Man attend to the
 Doctrine of Christ, and gain the know-
 ledge of it; yet if it do not descend in-
 to his Life, and govern his Actions, all
 that Man's hopes of Heaven are fond
 and groundless; and only that Man's
 hopes of Heaven are well grounded,
 who *knows the Doctrine of Christ, and*
 does

does it, Ver. 24. whosoever heareth these Ser. 12.
 Sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken 
 him to a Wise Man, who built his house up-
 on a rock, and the rain descended, and the
 floods came, and the winds blew, and beat
 upon that house, and it fell not, for it was
 founded upon a rock; and every one that
 heareth these sayings of mine, and doth
 them not, shall be liken'd to a foolish Man,
 who built his house upon the sand, and the
 rain descended, and the floods came, and
 the winds blew, and beat upon that house,
 and it fell, and great was the fall of it.
 Tho' a Man had a knowledge of Reli-
 gion as great and perfect as that which
 Solomon had of Natural Things, large
 as the sand upon the sea-shore; yet all
 this Knowledge separated from Practice,
 would be like the sand also in another
 respect, a weak Foundation for any
 Man to build his hopes of Happi-
 ness upon.

To the same purpose St. Paul speaks,
 Rom. 2. 13. Not the hearers of the Law
 are just before God; but the doers of
 the Law shall be justified. So likewise
 St. James, Chap. 1. 22. Be ye doers of
 the word, and not hearers only, deceiving
 your

Vol. IV. *your own selves; and ver. 25. Whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty (that is, the Law or Doctrine of the Gospel,) and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this Man shall be blessed in his deed; and therefore he adds, that the truth and reality of Religion is to be measured by the effects of it, in the government of our words, and ordering of our Lives, Ver. 26. If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this Man's Religion is vain. Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the Fatherless and Widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World. Men talk of Religion, and keep a great stir about it; but nothing will pass for true Religion before God, but the Virtuous and Charitable Actions of a good Life; and God will accept no Man to Eternal Life upon any other Condition. So the Apostle tells us most expressly, Heb. 12. 14. Follow peace with all Men, and holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord.*

Secondly,

Secondly, As God hath made the *Practice* of Religion a necessary Condition of our Happiness, so the very Nature and Reason of the thing makes it a necessary Qualification for it. It is necessary that we become like to God, in order to the enjoyment of him; and nothing makes us like to God, but the *Practice* of Holiness and Goodness. *Knowledge* indeed is a Divine Perfection; but that alone, as it doth not render a Man like God, so neither doth it dispose him for the enjoyment of him. If a Man had the understanding of an Angel, he might for all that be a Devil; *he that committeth sin is of the Devil*, and whatever *Knowledge* such a Man may have, he is of a devilish temper and disposition: *but every one that doth righteousness is born of God*. By this we are *like God*, and only by our likeness to him, do we become capable of *the sight and enjoyment* of him; therefore every Man that hopes to be Happy by the blessed sight of God in the next Life, must endeavour after Holiness in this Life. So the same Apostle tells us, 1 John 3. 3.

Vol. IV. *Every Man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* A wicked temper and disposition of Mind is, in the very Nature of the thing, utterly inconsistent with all reasonable hopes of Heaven.

Thus I have shewn that the *Practice* of Religion, and the *doing* of what we *know* to be our Duty, is the only way to Happiness.

And now the proper Inference from all this is, to put Men upon the careful *Practice* of Religion. Let no Man content himself with the *Knowledge* of his Duty, unless he *do* it; and to this purpose I shall briefly urge these *three* Considerations.

First, This is the great End of all our Knowledge in Religion, to *practise* what we *know*. The Knowledge of God and of our Duty hath so essential a respect to Practice, that the Scripture will hardly allow it to be properly called *Knowledge*, unless it have an influence upon our Lives. *1 John 2. 3, 4. Hereby we do know that*
we

we know him, if we keep his Command-ments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar, and the truth is not in him. Ser. 12.

Secondly, Practice is the best way to increase and perfect our *Knowledge*. Knowledge directs us in our Practice, but Practice confirms and increaseth our Knowledge, *John 7. 17. If any Man will do the will of God, he shall know of the Doctrine.* The best way to know God, is to be like him our selves, and to have the lively image of his Perfections imprinted upon our Souls; and the best way to understand the Christian Religion, is seriously to set about the Practice of it; this will give a Man a better Notion of Christianity, than any Speculation can.

Thirdly, without the Practice of Religion, our *Knowledge* will be so far from being any furtherance and advantage to our Happiness, that it will be one of the unhappiest aggravations of our misery. He that is ignorant of his Duty, hath some excuse to pretend for himself: but he that understands the

Vol.IV. Christian Religion, and does not live according to it, hath *no cloak for his sin*. The defects of our Knowledge, unless they be gross and wilful, will find an easie Pardon with God: but the faults of our Lives shall be severely punisht, when we *knew* our Duty and would not *do* it. I will conclude with that of our Saviour, *Luke 12. 47, 48. That Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* When we come into the other World, no Consideration will sting us more, and add more to the rage of our Torments than this, that we did wickedly, when we understood to have done better; and chose to make our selves Miserable, when we knew so well the way to have been Happy.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

Practice in Religion necessary
in proportion to our Know-
ledge.

LUKE XII. 47, 48.

And that Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes: But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

IN prosecution of the Argument which I handled in my last Discourse, namely, that the Knowledge of our Duty, without the Practice

Vol.IV. of it, will not bring us to Happiness,
 I shall proceed to shew, that if our
 Practice be not answerable to our
 Knowledge, this will be a great aggra-
 vation both of our Sin and Punish-
 ment.

And to this purpose, I have pitched
 upon these words of our Lord, which
 are the application of two Parables,
 which he had delivered before, to stir
 up Men to a diligent and careful Pra-
 ctice of their Duty, that so they may
 be in a continual readiness and prepa-
 ration for the coming of their Lord.
 The first Parable is more general, and
 concerns all Men, who are represented
 as so many Servants in a great Family,
 from which the Lord is absent, and
 they being uncertain of the time of
 his return, should always be in a con-
 dition and posture to receive him.
 Upon the hearing of this Parable, *Pe-*
ter enquires of our Saviour, whether
 he intended this only for his Disciples,
 or for all? To which Question our Sa-
 viour returns an Answer in another
 Parable, which more particularly con-
 cerned them; who because they were
 to

to be the Chief Rulers and Governours of his Church, are represented by the Stewards of a great Family, *Ver. 42. Who then is that faithful and wise Steward, whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?* If he discharge his Duty, *blessed is he*; but if he shall take occasion in his Lord's absence, to domineer over his fellow Servants, and riotously to waste his Lord's goods, his Lord, when he comes, will punish him after a more severe and exemplary manner. Ser. 13.

And then follows the application of the whole, in the words of the Text, *And that Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* As if he had said, and well may such a Servant deserve so severe a Punishment, who having such a trust committed to him, and knowing his Lord's will so much better, yet does contrary to it; upon which our Saviour takes occasion to compare the Fault and Punishment of those who have greater advantages and opportu-

Vol.IV. nities of knowing their Duty, with those who are ignorant of it; *That Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes: but he that knew not, but did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* And then he adds the Reason and the Equity of this proceeding, *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

The Words in general do allude to that Law of the Jews, mentioned *Deut. 25. 2.* where the Judge is required to see the Malefactor punish'd according to his Fault, by a certain number of Stripes; in relation to which known Law among the Jews, our Saviour here says, that *those who knew their Lord's will, and did it not, should be beaten with many stripes: but those who knew it not, should be beaten with few stripes.* So that there are two Observations lie plainly before us in the words.

First,

First, That the greater Advantages and Opportunities any man hath of knowing his Duty, if he do it not, the greater will be his Condemnation ; *The Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes.*


Secondly, That ignorance is a great excuse of Mens faults, and will lessen their Punishment ; *But he that knew not, but did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.*

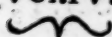
I shall begin with the latter of these *first*, because it will make way for the other ; *Viz.* That ignorance is a great excuse of Men's faults, and will lessen their Punishment ; *He that knew not but did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.*

For the clearing of this, it will be requisite to consider what ignorance it is which our Saviour here speaks of ; and this is necessary to be enquired into, because it is certain that there is some sort of ignorance which doth wholly

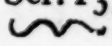
Vol.IV. wholly excuse and clear from all manner of guilt; and there is another sort, which doth either not at all, or very little extenuate the faults of Men, so that it must be a third sort, different from both these, which our Saviour here means.

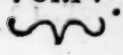
First, There is an ignorance which doth wholly excuse and clear from all manner of guilt, and that is an *absolute and invincible ignorance*, when a Person is wholly ignorant of the thing which if he knew, he should be bound to do, but neither can nor could have helpt it, that he is ignorant of it; that is, he either had not the Capacity, or wanted the Means and Opportunity of knowing it. In this Case a Person is in no fault, if he did not do what he never knew, nor could know to be his Duty. For God measures the faults of Men by their *Wills*, and if there be no defect there, there can be no guilt; for no Man is guilty, but he that is conscious to himself that he would not do what he knew he ought to do, or would do what he knew he ought not to do. Now if a Man be *simply and invincibly ignorant*

ignorant of his Duty, his neglect of it Ser. 13.
 is altogether *involuntary*; for the Will 
 hath nothing to do, where the Under-
 standing doth not first direct. And this
 is the Case of *Children* who are not yet
 come to the use of Reason; for tho'
 they may do that which is *materially* a
 fault, yet it is none *in them*, because by
 reason of their incapacity, they are at
 present *invincibly ignorant* of what they
 ought to do. And this is the Case like-
 wise of *Ideots*, who are under a natural
 incapacity of Knowledge, and so far
 as they are so, nothing that they do is
 imputed to them as a fault. The same
 may be said of distracted Persons, who
 are deprived either wholly, or at some
 times, of the use of their Understand-
 ings: so far, and so long as they are
 thus deprived, they are free from all
 guilt; and to Persons who have the
 free and perfect use of their Reason,
 no neglect of any Duty is imputed, of
 which they are *absolutely* and *invincibly*
ignorant. For instance, it is a Duty
 incumbent upon all Mankind, to be-
 lieve in the Son of God, where he is
 sufficiently manifested and revealed to
 them; but those who never heard of
 him,

Vol. IV.  him, nor had any opportunity of coming to the Knowledge of him, shall not be Condemned for this infidelity, because it is impossible they should *believe on him, of whom they never heard*; they may indeed be Condemned upon other accounts, for sinning against the light of Nature, and for not obeying *the Law which was written in their hearts*; for what the Apostle says of the Revelation of the Law, is as true of any other Revelation of God, *As many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law; and as many as have sinned under the Law, shall be judged by the Law, Rom. 2. 12.* In like manner, those who have sinned without the *Gospel*, (that is, who never had the knowledge of it) shall not be Condemned for any offence against that Revelation which was never made to them, but for their violation of *the Law of Nature*; only they that have *sinned under the Gospel*, shall be *judged by it*.

Secondly, there is likewise another sort of ignorance, which either does not at all, or very little extenuate the faults of Men, when Men are not
only

only ignorant, but *chuse to be so*; that Ser. 13.
is, when they wilfully neglect those 
Means and Opportunities of know-
ledge which are afforded to them;
such as *Job* speaks of, *Job* 21. 14. *Who*
say unto God depart from us, for we de-
sire not the knowledge of thy ways. And
this sort of ignorance many among the
Jews were guilty of, when our Saviour
came and preached to them, but they
would not be instructed by him; *The*
light came among them, but they loved
darkness rather than light, as he himself
says of them; and as he says elsewhere
of the Pharisees, *They rejected the Coun-*
sel of God against themselves, they wil-
fully shut their eyes against that light
which offered it self to them; *They*
would not see with their eyes, nor hear
with their ears, nor understand with their
hearts, that they might be converted, and
healed. Now an ignorance in this de-
gree wilful, can hardly be imagined
to carry any excuse at all in it. He that
knew not his Lord's Will, because he
would not know it, because he wilful-
ly rejected the Means of coming to
the knowledge of it, deserves to be
beaten with as many stripes, as if he
had

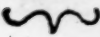
Vol.IV.  had known it; because he might have known it, and would not. He that will not take notice of the King's Proclamation, or will stop his ears when it is read, and afterwards offends against it, does equally deserve punishment with those who have read it, and heard it; and disobey'd it, because he was as grossly faulty in not knowing it; and there is no reason that any Man's gross fault should be his excuse.

So that it is neither of these sorts of ignorance that our Saviour means, neither absolute and invincible ignorance, nor that which is grossly wilful and affected; for the first, Men deserve not to be beaten at all, because they cannot help it; for the latter, they deserve not to be excused, because they might have helped their ignorance, and would not.

But our Saviour here speaks of such an ignorance as does in a good degree extenuate the fault, and yet not wholly excuse it; for he says of them,
that

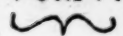
that *they knew not their Lord's will*, Ser. 13.
and yet that this ignorance did
not wholly excuse them from blame,
nor exempt them from punishment,
but they should be beaten with few stripes.
In the

Third place then, there is an ignorance which is in some degree faulty, and yet does in a great measure excuse the faults which proceed from it; and this is when Men are not absolutely ignorant of their Duty, but only in comparison of others, who have a far more clear and distinct Knowledge of it; and tho' they do not grossly and wilfully neglect the Means of further Knowledge, yet perhaps they do not make the best use they might of the opportunities they have of knowing their Duty better; and therefore in comparison of others, who have far better Means and Advantages of knowing their Lord's Will, they may be said not to know it, tho' they are not simply ignorant of it, but only have a more obscure and uncertain knowledge of it. Now this ignorance does in a
great

Vol. IV.  great measure excuse such Persons, and extenuate their Crimes, in comparison of those who had a clearer and more perfect knowledge of their Master's Will; and yet it does not free them from all guilt; because they did not live up to that degree of knowledge which they had; and perhaps if they had used more care and industry, they might have known their Lord's Will better. And this was the Case of the Heathen, who in comparison of those who enjoyed the light of the Gospel, might be said not to have known their Lord's Will, tho' as to many parts of their Duty, they had some directions from Natural Light, and their Consciences did urge them to many things by the obscure apprehensions and hopes of a Future Reward, and the fear of a Future Punishment. But this was but a very obscure and uncertain *knowledge*, in comparison of the clear Light of the Gospel, which hath discovered to us our Duty so plainly by the Laws and Precepts of it, and hath presented us with such powerful Motives and Arguments to Obedience in the Promises and Threatnings of it. And this likewise

wife is the Case of many Christians, Ser. 13.
who either through the natural flow-
ness of their Understandings, or by the
neglect of their Parents and Teachers,
or other Circumstances of their Educa-
tion, have had far less Means and Ad-
vantages of Knowledge than others.
God does not expect so much from
those, as from others, to whom he
hath given greater Capacity, and Ad-
vantages of Knowledge; and when
our Lord shall come to call his Ser-
vants to an account, they shall be beaten
with fewer stripes than others; they
shall not wholly escape, because they
were not wholly ignorant; but by how
much they had less Knowledge than
others, by so much their Punishment
shall be lighter.

And there is all the Equity in the
World it should be so, that Men
should be accountable according to
what they have received, and that to
whom less is given, less should be re-
quired at their hands. The Scripture
hath told us, that *God will judge the
World in Righteousness*; now Justice
does require, that in taxing the Punish-

Vol.IV.  ment of Offenders, every thing should be consider'd, that may be a just excuse and extenuation of their Crimes, and that accordingly their Punishment should be abated. Now the greatest extenuation of any fault is ignorance, which when it proceeds from no fault of ours, no fault can proceed from it; so that so far as any Man is innocently ignorant of his Duty, so far he is excusable for the neglect of it; for every degree of Ignorance takes off so much from the perverseness of the Will; *Et nihil ardet in inferno, nisi propria voluntas*, "Nothing is punisht in Hell, "but what is voluntary, and proceeds "from our Wills.

I do not intend this Discourse for any commendation of Ignorance, or encouragement to it. For Knowledge hath many advantages above it, and is much more desirable, if we use it well; and if we do not, it is our own fault; if we be not wanting to our selves, we may be much happier by our Knowledge, than any Man can be by his Ignorance; for tho' Ignorance may plead an excuse, yet it can hope for no
Reward;

Reward; and it is always better to need no excuse, than to have the best in the World ready at hand to plead for our selves. Besides, that we may do well to consider, that Ignorance is no where an excuse where it is cherisht; so that it would be the vainest thing in the World for any Man to foster it, in hopes thereby to excuse himself; for where it is wilful and chosen, it is a fault, and (as I said before) it is the most unreasonable thing in the World, that any Man's fault should prove his excuse. So that this can be no encouragement to Ignorance, to say that it extenuates the faults of Men: for it does not extenuate them, whenever it is wilful and affected; and whenever it is designed and chosen, it is wilful; and then no Man can reasonably design to continue ignorant, that he may have an excuse for his faults, because then the Ignorance is wilful, and whenever it is so, it ceaseth to be an excuse.

I the rather speak this, because Ignorance hath had the good fortune to meet with great Patrons in the World,

Vol.IV. and to be extol'd, tho' not upon this account, yet upon another, for which there is less pretence of Reason; as if it were the Mother of Devotion. Of Superstition I grant it is, and of this we see plentiful proof, among those who are so careful to preserve and cherish it: but that true Piety and Devotion should spring from it, is as unlikely, as that Darknes should produce Light. I do hope indeed, and Charitably believe, that the ignorance in which some are detained by their Teachers and Governours, will be a real excuse, to as many of them as are otherwise honest and sincere; but I doubt not, but the errors and faults which proceed from this ignorance, will lie heavy upon those who keep them in it. I proceed to the

Second Observation, That the greater Advantages and Opportunities any Man hath of knowing the will of God, and his Duty, the greater will be his Condemnation if he do not do it. The Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes. Which

Which knew his Lord's will, and prepared Ser. 13.
not himself; The preparation of our Mind to do the Will of God, whenever there is occasion and opportunity for it, is accepted with him; a Will rightly disposed to obey God, tho' it be not brought in to act, for want of opportunity, does not lose its Reward: but when, notwithstanding we know our Lord's Will, there are neither of these, neither the act, nor the preparation and resolution of doing it, what punishment may we not expect?

The Just God, in punishing the sins of Men, proportions the punishment to the Crime, and where the Crime is greater, the punishment riseth; as amongst the Jews, where the Crime was small, the Malefactor was sentenced to a few stripes; where it was great, he was *beaten with many*. Thus our Saviour represents the great Judge of the World dealing with Sinners; according as their Sins are aggravated, he will add to their punishment. Now after all the aggravations of sin, there is none that doth more intrinsically heighten the malignity of it, than when

Vol. IV. it is committed against the clear knowledge of our Duty, and that upon these *three* accounts.

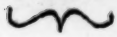
First, Because the Knowledge of God's Will is so great an advantage to the doing of it.

Secondly, Because it is a great obligation upon us to the doing of it.

Thirdly, Because the neglect of our Duty in this case, cannot be without a great deal of wilfulness and contempt. I shall speak briefly to these *three*.

First, Because the knowledge of God's Will is so great an advantage to the doing of it; and every advantage of doing our Duty, is a certain aggravation of our neglect of it. And this is the Reason which our Saviour adds here in the Text, *For to whomsoever much is given, of them much will be required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* It was, no doubt, a great discouragement and disadvantage to the Heathen,

then, that they were so doubtful concerning the Will of God, and in many cases left to the uncertainty of their own Reason, by what way and means they might best apply themselves to the pleasing of him ; and this discouraged several of the wisest of them from all serious endeavours in Religion, thinking it as good to do nothing, as to be mistaken about it. Others that were more naturally Devout, and could not satisfy their Consciences without some expressions of Religion, fell into various Superstitions, and were ready to embrace any way of Worship which Custom prescribed, or the fancies of Men could suggest to them ; and hence sprang all the stupid and barbarous Idolatries of the Heathen. For Ignorance growing upon the World, that natural propension which was in the Minds of Men to Religion, and the Worship of a Deity, for want of certain direction, exprest it self in those foolish and abominable Idolatries, which were practised among the Heathen.



And is it not then a mighty advantage to us, that we have the clear and certain direction of Divine Revelation? We have the Will of God plainly discovered to us, and all the parts of our Duty clearly defined and determined, so that no Man that is in any measure free from interest and prejudice, can easily mistake in any great and material part of his Duty. We have the Nature of God plainly revealed to us, and such a Character of him given, as is most suitable to our natural Conceptions of a Deity, as render him both awful and amiable; for the Scripture represents him to us as Great and Good, Powerful and Merciful, a perfect hater of Sin, and a great lover of Mankind; and we have the Law and manner of his Worship (so far as was needful) and the Rules of a good Life clearly exprest and laid down; and as a powerful Motive and Argument to the obedience of those Laws, a plain discovery made to us of the endless Rewards and Punishments of another World. And is not this a mighty advantage to the doing of God's Will

to have it so plainly declared to us, and so powerfully enforced upon us? So that our Duty lies plainly before us; we see what we have to do, and the danger of neglecting it; so that considering the advantage we have of doing God's Will, by our clear knowledge of it, we are altogether inexcusable if we do it not. Ser. 13.

Secondly, The knowledge of our Lord's Will is likewise a great obligation upon us to the doing of it. For what ought in reason to oblige us more to do any thing, than to be fully assur'd that it is the Will of God, and that it is the Law of the great Sovereign of the World, who is able to save, or to destroy? That it is the pleasure of him that made us, and who hath declared that he designs to make us happy, by our obedience to his Laws? So that if we know these things to be the Will of God, we have the greatest obligation to do them, whether we consider the Authority of God, or our own interest; and if we neglect them, we have nothing to say in our own excuse. We knew the Law, and the advantage of keeping

Vol. IV. keeping it, and the penalty of breaking it, and if after this we will transgress, there is no Apology to be made for us. They have something to plead for themselves, who can say, that tho' they had some apprehension of some parts of their Duty, and their Minds were apt to dictate to them that they ought to do some things; yet the different apprehensions of Mankind about several of these things, and the doubts and uncertainties of their own Minds concerning them, made them easie to be carried off from their Duty, by the vicious inclinations of their own Nature, and the tyranny of Custom and Example, and the pleasant temptations of flesh and blood; but had they had a clear and undoubted Revelation from God, and had certainly known these things to be his Will, this would have conquered and born down all Objections and Temptations to the contrary; or if it had not, would have stopt their mouths, and taken away all excuse from them. There is some colour in this plea, that in many cases they did not know certainly what the Will of God was: but for us who own

own a clear Revelation from God, and profess to believe it, what can we say for our selves, to mitigate the severity of God towards us; why he should not pour forth all his wrath, and execute upon us the fierceness of his anger?

Ser. 13.

Thirdly, The neglect of God's Will when we know it, cannot be without a great deal of wilfulness and contempt. If we know it, and do it not, the fault is solely in our Wills, and the more wilful any sin is, the more hainously wicked is it. There can hardly be a greater aggravation of a Crime, than if it proceed from meer obstinacy and perverseness; and if we know it to be our Lord's Will, and do it not, we are guilty of the highest contempt of the greatest Authority in the World. And do we think this to be but a small aggravation, to affront the great Sovereign and Judge of the World? not only to break his Laws, but to trample upon them and despise them, when we know whose Laws they are? *Will we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?* We believe that it is God who said, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery;*
thou

Vol. IV. *thou shalt not Steal; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour; thou shalt not hate, or oppress, or defraud thy Brother in any thing; but thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self; and will we notwithstanding venture to break these Laws, knowing whose Authority they are stampd withal? After this contempt of him, what favour can we hope for from him? What can we say for our selves, why any one of those many stripes which are threatned should be abated to us? Ignosci aliquatenus ignorantiae potest; contemptus veniam non habet;* "Something may be pardoned to "ignorance; but contempt can expect "no forgiveness. He that strikes his Prince, not knowing him to be so, hath something to say for himself, that tho' he did a disloyal act, yet it did not proceed from a disloyal Mind: but he that first acknowledgeth him for his Prince, and then affronts him, deserves to be prosecuted with the utmost severity, because he did it wilfully, and in meer contempt. The knowledge of our Duty, and that it is the Will of God which we go against, takes away all possible excuse from us; for nothing can

can be said, why we should offend Ser. 13.
him; who hath both Authority to com-
mand us, and Power to destroy us.

And thus I have, as briefly as I could, represented to you the true ground and reason of the aggravation of those Sins, which are committed against the clear knowledge of God's Will, and our Duty; because this knowledge is so great an advantage to the doing of our Duty; so great an obligation upon us to it; and because the neglect of our Lord's Will in this case, cannot be without great wilfulness, and a down-right contempt of his Authority.

And shall I now need to tell you, how much it concerns every one of us, to live up to that knowledge which we have of our Lord's Will, and to prepare our selves to do according to it; to be always in a readiness and disposition to do what we know to be his Will, and actually to do it, when there is occasion and opportunity? And it concerns us the more, because we, in this Age and Nation,
have

Vol. IV. have so many advantages, above a great part of the World, of coming to the knowledge of our Duty. We enjoy the clearest and most perfect Revelation which God ever made of his Will to Mankind, and have the light of Divine Truth plentifully shed amongst us, by the free use of the holy Scriptures, which is not a sealed Book to us, but lies open to be read, and studied by us; this Spiritual Food is *rained down* like Manna round about our *Tents*, and everyone may gather so much as is sufficient; we are not stinted, nor have the Word of God given out to us in broken pieces, or mixt and adulterated, here a Lesson of Scripture, and there a Legend; but whole and entire, sincere and uncorrupt.

God hath not left us, as he did the Heathen for many Ages, to the imperfect and uncertain direction of Natural Light; nor hath he revealed his Will to us, as he did to the Jews, in dark Types and Shadows: but hath made a clear discovery of his Mind and Will to us. The Dispensation which we are under, hath no veil upon it, *the Darknes*

*Darkness is past, and the true Light now Ser. 13.
shineth; we are of the Day, and of the Light, and therefore it may justly be expected that we should put off the Works of Darkness, and walk as Children of the Light. Every degree of knowledge which we have, is an aggravation of the Sins committed against it, and when our Lord comes to pass Sentence upon us, will add to the number of our stripes. Nay, if God should inflict no positive torment upon Sinners; yet their own Minds would deal most severely with them upon this account, and nothing will gall their Consciences more, than to remember against what Light they did offend. For herein lies the very nature and sting of all guilt, to be conscious to our selves, that we knew what we ought to have done, and did it not. The Vices and Corruptions which reigned in the World before, will be pardonable, in comparison of ours. The times of that ignorance God winked at: but now he commands all Men every where to Repent. Mankind had some excuse for their Errors before, and God was pleased in a great measure to overlook them: but if we continue still in our sins,*
we

Vol. IV. *we have no cloak for them.* All the degrees of Light which we enjoy, are so many Talents committed to us by our Lord, for the improving whereof, he will call us to a strict account; *for unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom he hath committed much, of him he will ask the more.* And nothing is more reasonable, than that Men should account for all the advantages and opportunities they have had of knowing the Will of God; and that as their knowledge was increased, so their sorrow and punishment should proportionably rise, if they sin against it. The ignorance of a great part of the World is deservedly pitied and lamented by us; but the Condemnation of none is so sad, as of those who having the knowledge of God's Will, neglect to do it; *how much better had it been for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them!* If we had been born, and brought up in ignorance of the true God and his Will, *we had had no sin*, in comparison of what now we have: *but now that we see, our sin remains.*

mains. This will aggravate our Condemnation beyond measure, that we had the knowledge of Salvation so clearly revealed to us. Our Duty lies plainly before us, we know what we ought to do, and *what manner of Persons we ought to be, in all holy Conversation and Godliness.* We believe the coming of our Lord to Judgment, and we know not how soon He may be *revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels,* not only to take vengeance on them that know not God, but on them that have known him, and yet *obey not the Gospel of his Son.* And if all this will not move us to prepare our selves to do our Lord's Will, we deserve to have our stripes multiplied. No Condemnation can be too heavy for those who offend against the clear knowledge of God's Will, and their Duty.

Let us then be persuaded to set upon the practice of what we know; let the light which is in our Understandings, descend upon our Hearts and Lives; let us not dare to continue any longer in the practice of any known Sin, nor in the neglect of any thing which we are

Vol. IV. *convinc'd is our Duty, and if our hearts condemn us not, neither for the neglect of the means of Knowledge, nor for rebelling against the Light of God's Truth shining in our Minds, and glaring upon our Consciences, then have we confidence towards God: but if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things.*

S E R

SERMON XIV.

The Sins of Men not chargeable upon God; but upon themselves.

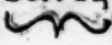
JAMES I. 13, 14.

Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any Man: But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

NEXT to the Belief a God, and his Providence, there is nothing more Fundamentally necessary to the practice of a good Life, than the belief of these two Principles *That God is not the Author of Sin,* and
D d 2 *That*

Vol. IV. *That every Man's Sin lies at his own door, and he hath reason to blame himself for all the evil that he does.*

First, That God is not the Author of Sin, that he is no way accessary to our faults, either by tempting or forcing us to the Commission of them. For if he were, they would neither properly be *Sins*, nor could they be justly punished. They would not properly be *Sins*, for *Sin* is a contradiction to the Will of God; but supposing Men to be either tempted or necessitated thereto, that which we call *Sin*, would either be a meer passive Obedience to the Will of God, or an active Compliance with it, but neither way a contradiction to it. Nor could these actions be justly punished; for all punishment supposeth a fault, and a fault supposeth liberty and freedom from force and necessity; so that no Man can be justly punished for that which he cannot help, and no Man can help that, which he is necessitated and compell'd to. And tho' there were no force in the case, but only temptation, yet it would be unreasonable for the same person to tempt and punish. For as nothing is more contrary to the holiness

liness of God, than to tempt Men to Sin; so nothing can be more against justice and goodness, than first to draw Men into a fault, and than to chastize them for it. So that this is a Principle which lies at the bottom of all Religion, *That God is not the Author of the Sins of Men.* And then, 

Secondly, That every Man's fault lies at his own door, and he has reason enough to blame himself for all the evil that he does. And this is that which makes Men properly guilty, that when they have done amiss, they are conscious to themselves it was their own act, and they might have done otherwise; and guilt is that which makes Men liable to punishment; and fear of punishment is the great restraint from Sin, and one of the principal Arguments for Virtue and Obedience.

And both these Principles our Apostle St. James does here fully assert in the words which I have read unto you. *Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any*

Vol. IV. *Man: But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed.*

In which words, these two things are plainly contained.

First, That God doth not tempt any Man to Sin. Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any Man.

Secondly, That every Man's fault lies at his own door, and he is his own greatest tempter. But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed.

I. That God doth not tempt any Man to Sin. Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any Man. In which words, there are three things to be considered.

First, The Proposition which the Apostle here rejects, and that is, That God

nor forces Men to Sin.

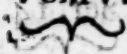
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God tempts Men. Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. Ser. 14.

Secondly, The manner in which he rejects it. *Let no Man say so.* By which manner of speaking, the Apostle insinuates these *two* Things. 1. That Men are apt to lay their faults upon God: For when he says, *Let no Man say so*; he intimates, that Men are apt to say so, and it is very probable that some *did* say so; and, 2^{dly}. That it is not only a fault, but an impious assertion to say that God tempts Men. He speaks of it as a thing to be rejected with detestation. *Let no Man say*; that is, far be it from us to affirm a thing so impious and dishonourable to God.

Thirdly, The Reason and Argument that he brings against it, *For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any Man.*

First, The Proposition which the Apostle here rejects, and that is, *That God tempts Men: Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.* Now that we may the more distinctly un-

Vol. IV.  derstand the meaning of the Proposition, which the Apostle here rejects, it will be very requisite to consider what *Temptation* is, and the several sorts and kinds of it. To *Tempt* a Man, is in general, nothing else but to make trial of him in any kind what he will do. In Scripture, *Temptation* is commonly confin'd to the trial of a Man's good or bad, of his virtuous or vicious Inclinations. But then it is such a trial as endangers a Man's virtue, and if he be not well resolved, is likely to overcome it, and to make him fall into Sin. So that temptation does always imply something of danger the worst way. And Men are thus tempted, either from themselves, or by others; by others chiefly these two ways.

First, By direct and down-right persuasions to Sin.

Secondly, By being brought into such Circumstances as will greatly endanger their falling into it, tho' none solicit and persuade them to it.

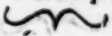
First,

First, By direct and down-right persuasions to Sin. Thus the Devil tempted our First Parents, by representing things so to them, as might on the one hand incite them to Sin, and on the other hand, weaken and loosen that, which was the great curb and restraint from it. On the one hand, he represents to them the advantages they should have by breaking God's Command. *God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* On the other hand, he represents the danger of offending not to be so great and certain as they imagined. *The Serpent said unto the Woman, ye shall not surely die.* And the Devil had so good success in this way of tempting the first Adam, as to encourage him to set upon the second, our Blessed Saviour, in the same manner; for he would have persuaded him to fall down and worship him, by offering him *all the Kingdoms of the World, and the glory of them.* And thus bad Men many times tempt others, and endeavour to draw them into the same wicked

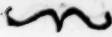
Vol. IV. wicked Courses with themselves. Solomon represents to us the manner and the danger of it, *Prov. 1. 10, 11, 13, 14.* *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not; if they say, come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil. Cast in thy lot amongst us, let us all have one purse.* This is the first way of temptation.

And to be sure God tempts no Man this way. He offers no Arguments to Man to persuade him to Sin; he nowhere proposeth either Reward or Impunity to Sinners: but on the contrary, gives all imaginable encouragement to Obedience, and threatens the transgression of his Law with most dreadful Punishments.

Secondly, Men are likewise tempted, by being brought into such Circumstances, as will greatly endanger their falling into Sin, tho' none persuade them to it; and this happens two ways; when Men are remarkably beset with the allurements of the World, or assaulted

ed with the Evils and Calamities of Ser. 14.
 it; for either of these Conditions are 
 great temptations to Men, and make
 powerful assaults upon them, especially
 when they fall upon those who are ill
 disposed before, or are but of a weak
 Virtue and Resolution.

The allurements of the World are
 strong temptations; Riches, and Ho-
 nours, and Pleasures, they are the Oc-
 casions and Incentives to many Lusts.
 Honour and Greatness, Power and Au-
 thority over others, especially when
 Men are suddenly lifted up, and from a
 low Condition, are apt to transport Men
 to Pride and Insolency towards others.
 Power is a strong Liquor which does
 easily intoxicate weak Minds, and
 make them apt to say and do unbecom-
 ing things. *Man that is in Honour and un-
 derstands not, is like the Beasts that pe-
 rish*; intimating that Men who are
 exalted to an high Condition, are very
 apt to forget themselves, and to play
 the Fools and Beasts. It requires great
 Consideration, and a well-poised Mind,
 not to be lifted up with one's Condi-
 tion. Weak heads are apt to turn and
 grow

Vol. IV. grow dizzy, when they look down from
 a great height.

And so likewise Ease and Prosperity are a very slippery Condition to most Men, and without great care, do endanger the falling into great Sins. So Solomon observes, *Prov. 1. 32. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* For this Reason Agur maketh his Prayer to God, that he would give him neither Poverty nor Riches, but keep him in a mean Condition, because of the danger of both extreams, *Prov. 30. 8, 9. Give me not Riches, lest I be full, and deny thee.* Both the eager desire, and the possession and enjoyment of Riches do frequently prove fatal to Men. So our Saviour tells us elsewhere very Emphatically, *Mat. 19. 23, 24. Verily I say unto you, that a Rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: And again I say unto you, it is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* St. Paul likewise very fully declares unto us the
 great

great danger of this Condition, 1 Tim. Ser. 14.
6. 9, 10. *But they that will be Rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown Men in destruction and perdition; for the love of Money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

But the greatest Bait of all to Flesh and Blood, is sensual Pleasures; the very presence and opportunity of these, are apt to kindle the Desires, and to inflame the Lusts of Men, especially where these temptations meet with suitable tempers, where every spark that falls catcheth.

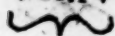
And on the other hand, the Evils and Calamities of this World, especially if they threaten or fall upon Men in any degree of extremity, are strong temptations to Human Nature. Poverty and Want, Pain and Suffering, and the fear of any great Evil, especially of Death, these are great straits to Human Nature, and apt to tempt Men to great Sins, to impatience and discontent,

Vol.IV. content, to unjust and dishonest shifts, to the forsaking of God, and Apostacy from his Truth and Religion. *Agur* was sensible of the dangerous temptation of Poverty, and therefore he prays against *that*, as well as against Riches; *Give me not Poverty, lest being Poor I steal, and take the name of the Lord my God in vain*; that is, lest I be tempted to Theft, and Perjury. The Devil, whose Trade it is to tempt Men to Sin, knew very well the force of these sorts of Temptations, when he desired God first to touch *Job* in his Estate, and to see what effect that would have, *Job* 1. 11. *But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.* And when he found himself deceived in this, surely he thought; that were he but afflicted with great bodily pains, that would put him out of all patience, and flesh and blood would not be able to withstand this Temptation, *Chap. 2. ver. 5. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* And this was the great Temptation that the Primitive Christians were assaulted withal; they were

were tempted to forsake Christ and his Religion, by a most violent Persecution, by the spoiling of their goods, by Imprisonment, and Torture, and Death. And this is that kind of Temptation which the Apostle particularly speaks of before the Text, *Blessed is the Man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*; and then it follows, *Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God*. And thus I have given an account of the several sorts of temptations comprehended under this *second* Head, namely, when Men are tempted by being brought into such Circumstances as do greatly endanger their falling into Sin, by the Allurements of this World, and by the Evils and Calamities of it.

Now the Question is, how far God hath an hand in these kind of temptations, that so we may know how to limit this Proposition, which the Apostle here rejects, *that Men are tempted of God*. *Let no Man say, when he is tempted; I am tempted of God*.

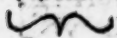
That



That the Providence of God does order, or at least permit Men to be brought into these Circumstances I have spoken of, which are such dangerous temptations to Sin, no Man can doubt, that believes his Providence to be concern'd in the affairs of the World. All the Difficulty is, how far the Apostle does here intend to exempt God from an hand in these temptations. Now for the clearer understanding of this, it will be requisite to consider the several Ends and Reasons, which those who tempt others may have in tempting them; and all temptation is for one of these *three* Ends or Reasons; either for the trial and improvement of Men's Virtues; or by way of Judgment and Punishment for some former great Sins and Provocations; or with a direct purpose and design to seduce Men to Sin; these I think are the chief Ends and Reasons that can be imagined, of exercising Men with dangerous temptations.

First, For the exercise and improvement of Men's Graces and Virtues. And this is the End which God always aims at,

at, in bringing good Men, or permitting them to be brought into dangerous temptations. And therefore St. James speaks of it as a matter of joy, when good Men are exercised with afflictions; not because afflictions are desirable for themselves, but because of the happy consequences of them, *Ver. 2, 3.* of this Chap. *My Brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.* And to the same purpose St. Paul, *Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5.* *We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience; δοκιμὴν, Patience trieth a Man, and this trial worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.* These are happy effects and consequences of affliction and suffering, when they improve the Virtues of Men, and increase their Graces, and thereby make way for the increase of their Glory. Upon this account, St. James pronounceth those *Blessed*, who are *thus tempted. Blessed is the Man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*



And this certainly is no disparagement to the Providence of God, to permit Men to be thus tempted, when he permits it for no other end, but to make them better Men, and thereby to prepare them for a greater Reward: And so the Apostle assures us, *Rom. 8. 17, 18. If so be we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him; for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. And ver. 28. For we know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God.* And this happy end and issue of temptations to good Men the Providence of God secures to them (if they be not wanting to themselves) one of these two ways, either by proportioning the temptation to their strength; or if it exceed *that*, by ministring new strength and support to them, by the secret and extraordinary aids of his Holy Spirit.

First, By proportioning the temptation to their strength; ordering things so by his secret and wise Providence, that they shall not be assaulted by any temptation, which is beyond their strength

strength to resist and overcome. And Ser. 14.
herein the security of good Men doth
ordinarily consist; and the very best of
us, those who have the firmest and most
resolute virtue were in infinite danger,
if the Providence of God did not take
this care of us. For a temptation may set
upon the best Men with so much vio-
lence, or surprize them at such an ad-
vantage, as no ordinary degree of grace
and virtue is able to withstand: But
where Men are sincerely good, and ho-
nestly resolv'd, the Providence of God
doth ward off these fierce blows, and
put by these violent thrusts, and by a
secret disposal of things, keep them
from being assaulted by these irresist-
ible kinds of temptations.

The Consideration whereof, as it is
a great encouragement to Men to be sin-
cerely good, so likewise a great Ar-
gument for a continual dependance
upon the Providence of God, and to
take us off from confidence in our
selves, and our own strength. And this
use the Apostle makes of it, 1 Cor. 10.
12. *Wherefore let him that thinketh he
standeth,* (that is confident that nothing
shall be able to shake him, or throw

Vol. IV. him down) *take heed lest he fall ; there
 hath no temptation taken you, but such
 as is common to Men ;* ἐν μὲν ἀνθρώποις, *but what is humane ; nothing but what
 an humane strength, assisted by an or-
 dinary Grace of God, may be able to re-
 sist and conquer. But there are greater
 and more violent temptations than
 these, which you have not yet been
 tried with ; and when those happen,
 we must have recourse to God for an ex-
 traordinary assistance. And this is the*

*Second way I mention'd, whereby
 the Providence of God does secure good
 Men in case of extraordinary temptati-
 ons, which no humane strength can pro-
 bably resist. And this the same Apostle
 assures us of in the very next words,
 God is faithful, who will not suffer you to
 be tempted above what you are able, but
 will with the temptation also make a way to
 escape, that you may be able to bear it.
 That is, in case of great and violent
 temptations (such as the Christians in
 the height of their Persecutions were
 exposed to) God will secretly minister
 strength and support equal to the force
 and power of the temptation. And this
 God*

God did in an extraordinary manner to the Christian Martyrs, and that to such a degree, as made them joyfully to embrace their Sufferings, and with the greatest chearfulness in the world to endure those torments, which no humane patience was able to bear. And where God doth thus secure Men against temptations, or support them under them, it is no reflection at all upon the goodness or justice of his Providence, to permit them to be thus tempted. Ser. 14.

Secondly, God permits others to be thus tempted, by way of Judgment and Punishment for some former great Sins and Provocations which they have been guilty of. And thus many times God punisheth great and notorious offenders, by permitting them to fall into great temptations, which meeting with a vicious disposition, are likely to be too hard for them, especially considering how by a long habit of wickedness, and wilful commission of great and notorious Sins, they have made themselves an easie Prey to every temptation, and have driven the Spirit of God from them, and deprived themselves of those

Vol.IV. aids and restraints of his Grace, which he ordinarily affords, not only to good Men, but likewise to those who are not very bad. And thus God is said to have *hardened Pharaoh* by those Plagues and Judgments which he sent upon him and his Kingdom. But if we carefully read the Story, it is said that *he first harden'd himself*, and then that *God hardened him*; that is, he being hardened under the first Judgments of God, God sent more, which meeting with his obstinacy, had this unnatural effect upon him, to harden him yet more; not that God did infuse any wickedness or obstinacy into him, but by his just Judgments sent more Plagues upon him, which hardened him yet more, and which were likely to have that effect upon him, considering the ill temper of the Man. And it was just by way of punishment that they should. And so likewise, *Joshua* 11. 19, 20. it is said that the Cities of the *Canaanites* did not make peace with *Joshua*, because *it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in Battel, that he might destroy them utterly*; that is, for their former iniquities, the measure whereof was

was now full, the Providence of God Ser. 14.
 did justly bring them into, and leave
 them under those Circumstances, which
 made them obstinate against all terms
 of Peace, and this proved fatal to them.


And in the like sense we are to understand several other expressions in Scripture, which likewise might seem very harsh. As *Isaiah 6. 10.* *Make the heart of this People fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed;* all which expressions signifie no more, but that God, for the former provocations and impenitency of that People, did leave them to their own hardness and blindness, so that they did not desire to understand and make use of the means of their recovery. So likewise, *Rom. 1. 24.* God is said to have *given up* the idolatrous Heathen *to uncleanness, to vile and unnatural lusts;* and *Ver. 28.* *to a reprobate and injudicious Mind;* that is, as a punishment of their Idolatry, he left them to the power of those temptations, which betrayed them to the vilest lusts.

Vol.IV. And to mention but one Text more,
 ~~~~~ 2 *Thes.* 2. 11. the Apostle threatens  
 those that rejected the truth, that *for this*  
*cause God would send them strong delusions,*  
*(the efficacy of error) that they should*  
*believe a lye, that they all might be damned,*  
*who believed not the truth, but had plea-*  
*sure in unrighteousness;* that is, as a just  
 punishment for their renouncing the  
 truth, God gave them over to the power  
 of delusion; their error had its full scope  
 at them, to tempt them with all its co-  
 lours and pretences.

But it is observable, that, in all these  
 places which I have mention'd, God is  
 said to give Men up to the power of  
 temptation, as a punishment of some  
 former great Crimes and Provocations.  
 And it is not unjust with God thus to  
 deal with Men, to leave them to the  
 power of temptation, when they had  
 first wilfully forsaken him; and in this  
 case God doth not tempt Men to Sin,  
 but leaves them to themselves, to be  
 tempted by their own hearts lusts;  
 and if they yield and are Conquered, it  
 is their own fault, because they have  
 neglected God's Grace, whereby they  
 might


might have been able to have resisted Ser. 14.  
those temptations; and have forced his  
holy Spirit to withdraw himself from  
them, and to leave them open and na-  
ked to those assaults of temptation, a-  
gainst which they might otherwise have  
been sufficiently armed.

*Thirdly*, The last end of temptation  
which I mentioned, is to try Men, with  
a direct purpose and intention to seduce  
Men to Sin. Thus wicked Men tempt  
others, and thus the Devil tempts Men.  
Thus he tempted our first Parents, and  
seduced them from their Obedience and  
Allegiance to God. Thus he tempted  
*Job*, by bringing him into those Cir-  
cumstances, which were very likely to  
have forc'd him into impatience, and  
discontent. And thus he tempted our  
blessed Saviour; but *found nothing in*  
*him* to work upon, or to give him any  
advantage over him. And thus he daily  
tempts Men, by laying all sorts of baits  
and snares before them, *going about con-*  
*tinually, seeking whom he may seduce and*  
destroy; and as far as God permits  
him, and his Power reacheth, he suits  
his temptations as near as he can to the  
humours

Vol.IV.  humours and appetites and inclinations of Men, contriving them into such circumstances, as that he may ply his temptations upon them to the greatest advantage; propounding such Objects to them, as may most probably draw forth the corruptions of Men, and kindle their irregular desires, and inflame their lusts, and tempt their evil inclinations that way, which they are most strongly bent. He tempts the Covetous Man with Gain, the Ambitious Man with Preferment, the Voluptuous Man with Carnal and Sensual Pleasures; and where none of these baits will take, he stirs up his Instruments to persecute those, who are stedfast and confirmed in Resolutions of Piety and Virtue, to try if he can work upon their Fear, and shake their Constancy and Fidelity to God and Goodness that way; and all this he doth with a direct design and earnest desire to seduce Men from their Duty, and to betray them to Sin.

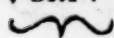
But thus *God tempts no Man*, and in this sense it is that the Apostle means, that *no Man when he is tempted, is tempted of God*. God hath no design to seduce  
duce



duce any Man to Sin. He often proves Ser. 14.  
the obedience of Men, and suffers them   
to fall into divers temptations, for the  
trial of their faith, and exercise of their  
obedience, and other Virtues; and he  
permits bad Men to be assaulted with  
great temptations, and as a punishment  
of their former obstinacy and impiety,  
withdraws the aids and assistances of  
his Grace from them, and leaves them  
to their own weakness and folly; but  
not so as to take away all restraint of  
his Grace even from bad Men, unless it  
be upon very high provocation, and a  
long and obstinate continuance in Sin:  
But God never tempts any Man, with  
any intention to seduce him to Sin, and  
with a desire he should do wickedly.  
This is the proper work of the Devil and  
his Instruments; in this sense it is far  
from God to tempt any Man; and when-  
ever in the ordinary course, and by the  
common permission of his Providence,  
Men fall into temptation, the utmost that  
God does, is to leave them to themselves;  
and he does not do this neither, but to  
those who have highly provoked him to  
depart from them; that is, to those  
who have justly deserved to be so dealt  
withal.

And

Vol.IV.



And thus I have consider'd the Proposition which the Apostle here rejects, namely, *that God tempts Men*, and have shewn as clearly as I can, how it is to be limited and understood. I now proceed to the *second* thing which I propounded to consider, *viz.* The manner in which the Apostle rejects this Proposition, *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.* By which manner of speaking, he insinuates *two* Things.

*First*, That Men are apt to lay their faults upon God. For when he says, *let no Man say so*, he intimates that Men were apt *to say* thus; and 'tis probable some *did say so*, to excuse themselves for their deserting their Religion upon the temptation of Persecution and Suffering. 'Tis not unlikely, that Men might lay the fault upon God's Providence, which exposed them to these difficult trials, and thereby tempted them to forsake their Religion.

But however this be, we find it very natural to Men, to transfer their faults upon others. Men are naturally sensible

fible when they offend, and do contrary to their Duty; and the guilt of Sin is an heavy burthen, of which Men would be glad to ease themselves as much as they can; and they think it is a mitigation and excuse of their faults, if they did not proceed only from themselves, but from the violence and compulsion, the temptation and instigation of others. But especially Men are very glad to lay their faults upon God, because he is a full and sufficient excuse, nothing being to be blamed that comes from him. Thus *Adam* did, upon the commission of the very first Sin that Mankind was guilty of. When God charged him for breaking of his Law, by eating of the fruit of the forbidden Tree, he endeavours to excuse himself, by laying the fault obliquely upon God; *The Woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat. The Woman whom thou gavest to be with me;* he does what he can to derive the fault upon God. And tho' this be very unreasonable, yet it seems it is very natural. Men would fain have the pleasure of committing Sin, but then they would be glad to remove as much of  
of

Vol.IV. of the trouble and guilt of it from  
 themselves as they can.

*Secondly*, This manner of Speech, which the Apostle here useth, doth insinuate further to us, that it is not only a false, but an impious assertion to say that God tempts Men to Sin. He speaks of it, not only as a thing unfit to be said, but fit to be rejected with the greatest indignation; *let no Man say*, that is, far be it from us to affirm any thing so impious and so dishonourable to God. For nothing can be more contrary to the holy and righteous nature of God, and to those plain declarations which he hath made of himself, than to seduce Men to wickedness; and therefore no Man, that hath any regard to the honour of God, can entertain the least suspicion of his having any hand in the Sins of Men, or give heed to any Principles or Doctrines, from whence so odious and abominable a Consequence may be drawn. I proceed to the

*Third Thing* I propounded to consider, *viz.* The Reason or Argument which

which the Apostle brings against this Ser. 14.  
 impious suggestion; *That God cannot be*  
*tempted with evil*, and therefore no  
 Man can imagine that he should tempt  
 any Man to it; *Let no Man say, when he*  
*is tempted, I am tempted of God*; for God  
*cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth*  
*he any Man.* And in speaking to  
 this, I shall

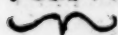
*First* Consider the strength and force  
 of this Argument; And

*Secondly*, The Nature and Kind of  
 it.

*First*, The strength and force of this  
 Argument, *God cannot be tempted with*  
*evil, neither tempteth he any Man*;  
*ἀπειρασός ἐστι θεός*, he is untempta-  
 ble by evil; he cannot be drawn to any  
 thing that is bad himself, and therefore  
 it cannot be imagined he should have  
 any inclination or design to seduce o-  
 thers. And this will appear to be a  
 strong and forcible Argument, if we  
 consider,

*First*,



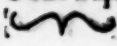


*First*, The Proposition upon which it is grounded, *that God cannot be tempted by evil.*

*Secondly*, The Consequence that clearly follows from it; and that is, that because God cannot be tempted by evil, therefore *he cannot tempt any Man to it.*

*First*, We will consider the Proposition upon which this Argument is built, and that is, *that God cannot be tempted by evil.* He is out of the reach of any temptation to evil. Whoever is tempted to any thing, is either tempted by his own inclination, or by the allurements of the Object, or by some external Motive and Consideration: but none of all these can be imagined to have any place in God, to tempt him to evil.

For, *First*, he hath no temptation to it from his own inclination. The holy and pure Nature of God is at the greatest distance from evil, and at the greatest contrariety to it. He is so far from having any inclination to evil, that it  
is

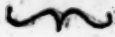
is the only thing in the World to which Ser. 14.  
 he hath an irreconcilable Antipathy.   
 This the Scripture frequently declares  
 to us, and that in a very emphatical  
 manner. *Psal. 5. 4. He is not a God  
 that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither  
 shall evil dwell with him.* The words are  
 a *Diminution*, and less is said, than is  
 intended by them; the meaning is,  
 that God is so far from taking pleasure  
 in Sin, that he hath a perfect hatred  
 and abhorrence of it. *Hab. 2. 13. Thou  
 art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and  
 canst not look upon iniquity.* As when  
 Men hate a thing to the highest degree,  
 they turn away their eyes, and cannot  
 endure to look upon it. Light and  
 Darknes are not more opposite to one  
 another, than the Holy Nature of God  
 is to Sin. *What fellowship hath Light with  
 Darknes, or God with Belial?*

*Secondly,* There is no allurement in  
 the Object, to stir up any inclination in  
 him towards it. Sin in its very nature is  
 imperfection, and irregularity, crook-  
 edness, and deformity; so that unless  
 there be an inclination to it before-  
 hand, there is nothing in it to move

now

F t

any

Vol. IV. any ones liking or desire towards it ;  
 it hath no attractives or enticements in  
 it, but to a corrupt and ill-disposed  
 Mind.

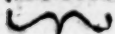
*Thirdly,* Neither are there external  
 Motives and Considerations, that can  
 be imagined to tempt God to it. All  
 Arguments that have any temptation,  
 are either founded in hope or fear ; ei-  
 ther in the hope of gaining some benefit  
 or advantage, or in the fear of falling  
 into some mischief or inconvenience.  
 Now the Divine Nature being perfectly  
 happy, and perfectly secured in its  
 own happiness, is out of the reach of  
 any of these temptations. Men are  
 many times tempted to evil very strong-  
 ly by these Considerations ; they want  
 many things to make them happy, and  
 they fear many things which may  
 make them miserable ; and the hopes  
 of the one, and the fears of the other,  
 are apt to work very powerfully upon  
 them, to seduce them from their Duty,  
 and to draw them to Sin : but the Di-  
 vine Nature is firm against all these at-  
 tempts, by its own fulness and securi-  
 ty. So that you see now the Proposi-  
 tion

tion, upon which the Apostle grounds his Argument, is evidently true, and beyond all exception, *that God cannot be tempted with evil.* Let us then in the

Ser. 14.

*Second place*, consider the Consequence that clearly follows from it; That because God cannot be tempted with evil, *therefore he cannot tempt any Man to it.* For why should he desire to draw Men into that, which he himself abhors, and which is so contrary to his own nature and disposition? When Men tempt one another to Sin, they do it to make others like themselves; and when the Devil tempts Men to Sin, it is either out of direct malice to God, or out of envy to Men. But none of these Considerations can have any place in God, or be any Motive to him to tempt Men to Sin.

Bad Men tempt others to Sin, to make them like themselves, and that with one of these *two* Designs; either for the comfort or pleasure of Company, or for the countenance of it, that there may be some kind of Apology and Excuse for them.



For the Comfort and Pleasure of Company. Man does not love to be alone; and for this Reason bad Men endeavour to make others like themselves, that agreeing with them in the same disposition and manners, they may be fit Company for them. For no Man takes pleasure in the Society and Conversation of those, who are of contrary Tempers and Inclinations to them, because they are continually warring and clashing with one another. And for this Reason bad Men hate and persecute those that are good. *Let us lie in wait (say they) for the Righteous, because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary to our doings; he is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other Mens, and his ways are of another fashion; as it is exprest in the Wisdom of Solomon.* So that wicked Men tempt others to Sin, that they may have the pleasure and contentment of their Society. But now for this Reason God cannot be imagined to tempt Men to Sin; because that would be the way to make them unlike himself, and such as his Soul could take no pleasure in.

Another



Another Design that bad Men have in seducing others to Sin, is thereby to give countenance to their bad actions, and to be some kind of Excuse and Apology for them. Among Men, the multitude of Offenders does sometimes procure impunity, but it always gives countenance to Vice; and Men are apt to alledge it in their excuse, that they are not alone guilty of such a fault, that they did not do it without Company and Example; which is the Reason of that Law, *Exod. 23. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil;* implying, that Men are very apt to take encouragement to any thing that is bad, from Company and Example. But neither hath this Reason any place in God, who being far from doing evil himself, can have no Reason to tempt others to do so, by way of excuse, and vindication of himself.

And when the Devil tempts Men to Sin, it is either out of direct malice to God, or out of envy to Men. Out of malice to God, to spoil his Workmanship, and to pervert that

Vol. IV. which came innocent and upright out of his hands ; to rob God of his Subjects, and to debauch them from their Duty and Allegiance to him ; to strengthen the Rebellion which he has raised against God, and to make him as many Enemies as he can. But for this End God cannot tempt any Man ; for this would be to procure dishonour to himself, and to deface the work of his own hands.

Another Reason why the Devil tempts Men, is Envy. When he was fallen from God, and Happiness, and by his own Rebellion had made himself miserable, he was discontented to see the happy Condition of Man, and *it grieved him at his very heart* ; and this moved him to tempt Man to Sin, that he might involve him in the same misery into which he had plunged himself. It is a pleasure to Envy to over-turn the happiness of others, and to lay them level with themselves. But the Divine Nature is full of goodness, and delights in the happiness of all his Creatures. His

own

own incomparable felicity has placed him as much above any temptation to envying others, as above any occasion of being contemned by them. He grudges no Man's Happiness, and therefore cannot tempt Men to Sin, out of a desire to see them miserable. So that none of those Considerations which move the Devil to tempt Men to Sin, and Evil Men to tempt one another to do wickedly, can be imagined to have any place in God. Ser. 14.

And thus you see the force of the Apostle's Argument, that because *God cannot be tempted to evil*, therefore *he can tempt no Man*. None tempt others to be bad, but those who are first so themselves. I shall now in the

*Second place, Consider the Nature and Kind of the Argument, which the Apostle here useth, Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any Man. He does not reject this impious Pro-*

Vol. IV. position barely upon his own Authority; but he argues against it from the Nature and Perfection of God; and therein appeals to the common Notions of Mankind concerning God. We might very well have rested in his Authority, being an Apostle Commissioned by our Saviour, and extraordinarily assisted and witnessed to, by the Miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, wherewith he was endowed. But he condescends to give a Reason of what he says, and appeals to the common Principles of Mankind. For all Men will readily agree to this, *that God hath all imaginable perfection*: but it is a plain imperfection to be liable to be tempted to Evil, and therefore *God cannot be tempted to Evil*. And if so, it is as impossible *that he should tempt others to it*; for none can have either an inclination or interest to seduce others to Evil, but those who have been first seduced to it themselves.

Now in this Method of Arguing, the Apostle teacheth us one of the surest

surest ways of Reasoning in Religion; namely, from the *Natural Notions which Men have of God.* So that all Doctrines plainly contrary to those Natural Notions which Men have of God, are to be rejected, what Authority soever they pretend to; whatever plainly derogates from the goodness or justice of God, or any other of his Perfections, is certainly false, what Authority soever it may claim from the Judgment of Learned and Pious Men; yea tho' it pretend to be countenanc'd from the Texts and Expressions of Holy Scripture. Because nothing can be entertain'd as a Divine Revelation, which plainly contradicts the common Natural Notions which Mankind have of God. For all Reasoning about Divine Revelation, and whether that which pretends to be so, be really so or not, is to be govern'd by those Natural Notions. And if any thing that pretends to be a Revelation from God, should teach Men that there is no God, or that he is not Wise, and Good, and Just, and



Vol.IV. and Powerful ; this is Reason enough  
to reject it, how confident soever  
the pretence be, that it is a Divine  
Revelation.

And if any thing be, upon good  
grounds in Reason, received for a  
Divine Revelation, (as the Holy  
Scriptures are amongst Christians)  
no Man ought to be regarded, who  
from thence pretends to maintain  
any Doctrine contrary to the Natu-  
ral Notions, which Men have of  
God ; such as clearly contradict his  
Holiness, or Goodness, or Justice, or  
do by plain and undeniable Conse-  
quence make God the Author of  
Sin, or the like ; because the very  
attempt to prove any such thing  
out of Scripture, does strike at the  
Divine Authority of those Books.  
For if they be from God, it is cer-  
tain they can contain no such thing.  
So that no Man ought to suffer  
himself to be seduced into any such  
Opinions, upon pretence that there  
are expressions in Scripture, which  
seem to countenance them. For if  
they

they really did so, the Consequence Ser. 14.  
would not be the confirming of such  
Opinions; but the weakning of the  
Authority of the Scripture it self. For  
just so many Arguments as any Man  
can draw from Scripture for any  
such Opinion, so many Weapons he  
puts into the hands of Atheists a-  
gainst the Scripture it self.

I do not speak this, as if I thought  
there were any ground from Scrip-  
ture for any such Doctrine, I am  
very certain there is not. And if  
there by any particular expressions,  
which to prejudic'd Men may seem  
to import any such thing, every  
Man ought to govern himself in  
the interpretation of such passages,  
by what is clear and plain, and a-  
greeable to the main Scope and Te-  
nour of the Bible, and to those Na-  
tural Notions which Men have of  
God, and of his Perfections. For  
when all is done, this is one of  
the surest ways of Reasoning in  
Religion; and whoever guides him-  
self, and steers by this Compass,  
can

Vol. IV. can never err much: but whoever suffers himself to be led away by the appearance of some more obscure Phrases in the expressions of Scripture, and the glosses of Men upon them, without regard to this Rule, may run into the greatest Delusions, may wander Eternally, and lose himself in one Mistake after another, and shall never find his way out of this endless *Labyrinth*, but by *this Clue*.

If St. James had not been an Apostle, the Argument which he useth would have convinced any reasonable Man, *that God tempts no Man to Sin*, because *he cannot be tempted with Evil himself*, and therefore it is unreasonable to imagine *he should tempt any Man*. For he argues from such a Principle, as all Mankind will, at first hearing, assent to.

And thus I have done with the *first Thing* asserted by the Apostle here in the Text; *That God tempts no Man to Sin*.

*Sin. Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any Man. Before I proceed to the second Assertion, That every Man is his own greatest Tempter, I should draw some useful Inferences from what hath been already delivered: but I reserve both the one and the other to the next Opportunity.*

Ser. 14.

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## SERMON XV.

The Sins of Men not chargeable  
upon God ; but upon them-  
selves.

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JAMES I. 13, 14.

*Let no Man say when he is tempted, I am  
tempted of God ;. for God cannot be  
tempted with evil, neither tempteth he  
any Man : But every Man is tempted,  
when he is drawn away of his own lust,  
and enticed.*

**W**HEN I made entrance up-  
on these Words, I told you,  
that next to the Belief of a  
God and a Providence, nothing is more  
funda-

Vol. IV. fundamentally necessary to the Practice of a good Life, than the Belief of these two Principles ; *That God is not the Author of the Sins of Men ; and That every Man's fault lies at his own door.* And both these Principles St. James does clearly and fully assert in these Words.

*First, God tempts no Man to Sin.*

*Secondly, Every Man is his own greatest Tempter.*

The *first* of these I have largely spoken to in my former Discourse ; and from what I then said, I shall only draw a few useful Inferences, before I proceed to the *second* ; *Viz.* These which follow.

*First,* Let us beware of all such Doctrines, as do any ways tend to make God the Author of Sin ; either by laying a Necessity upon Men of Sinning, or by laying secret Designs to tempt and seduce Men to Sin. Nothing can be farther from the Nature of God, than

than to do any such thing, and no- Ser. 15.  
 thing can be more dishonourable to him, than to imagine any such thing of him; *he is of purer eyes than to behold evil*; and can we think, that he who cannot endure to see it, should have any hand in it? We find that the Holy Men in Scripture are very careful to remove all thought and suspicion of this from God. *Elihu, Job 36. 3.* before he would argue about God's Providence with *Job*, he resolves in the first place, to attribute nothing to God, that is unworthy of him. *I will* (says he) *ascribe righteousness to my Maker.* So likewise *St. Paul, Rom. 7. 7.* *What shall we say then? Is the Law Sin? God forbid. Is the Law Sin?* That is, hath God given Men a Law to this end, that he might draw them into Sin? far be it from him. *Gal. 2. 17.* *Is Christ the minister of Sin? God forbid.*

You see then how tender good Men have always been of ascribing any thing to God, that might seem to render him the Author of Sin. So that

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we

Vol. IV. we have reason to take heed of all Doctrines that are of this tendency ; such as are the Doctrines of an absolute and irrespective Decree to damn the greatest part of Mankind ; and in order to that, and as a Means to it, efficaciously to permit Men to Sin. For if these things be true, that God hath absolutely decreed to damn the greatest part of Men, and to make good this Decree, he permits them to Sin, not by a bare permission of leaving them to themselves, but by such a permission as shall be efficacious ; that is, he will so permit them to Sin, as they cannot avoid it ; then those who are under this Decree of God, are under a necessity of Sinning ; which necessity, since it does not proceed from themselves, but from the Decree of God, does by consequence make God the Author of Sin. And then that other Doctrine, which is subservient to this, that God does by a Physical and Natural influence upon the Minds and Wills of Men, determine them to every action that they do, to bad actions as well as good. I know they who say so, tell us that God only determines Men to the

the action, but not to the evil of it. Ser. 14.  
 For instance, when *Cain* kill'd his Brother, God determin'd him (they say) to the Natural Action of taking away a Man's Life, which in many Cases may be done without Sin. Very true, but if in these Circumstances the Natural Action could not be done without committing the Sin, he that determin'd him to the Natural Action, determin'd him likewise to the Sin.

I am far from any thought that those that maintain these Doctrines, had any intention to make God the Author of Sin: but if this be the necessary Consequence of these Doctrines, there is Reason enough to reject them, how innocent soever the intention be of those who maintain them.

*Secondly*, Let not us tempt any Man to Sin. All Piety pretends to be an imitation of God, therefore let us endeavour to be like him in this. 'Tis true indeed, we may be tempted with evil, and therefore we are likely enough to tempt others: but we ought not to do so. It is contrary to holiness and goodness,



Vol. IV. ness, to the temper and disposition of  
 the most perfect Being in the World.  
 God tempts no Man ; nay, it is the  
 proper Work and Employment of the  
 Devil, 'tis his very Trade and Profes-  
 sion ; he goes about, seeking whom he  
 may betray into Sin and Destruction.  
 To this end he walks up and down the  
 Earth, waiting all Opportunities and  
 Advantages upon Men to draw them  
 into Sin ; so that we are his Factors  
 and Instruments, whenever we tempt  
 Men to Sin.

Let those Consider this, who are so  
 active and busie to seduce Men into any  
 kind of wickedness, and to instruct  
 them in the Arts of Iniquity, who tempt  
 Men into bad Company and Courses,  
 and take pleasure in debauching a Vir-  
 tuous Person, and make it matter of  
 great Triumph to make a sober Man  
 drunk, as if it were so glorious an Acti-  
 on to ruin a Soul, and destroy that, which  
 is more worth than the whole World.  
 Whenever you go about this Work, re-  
 member whose Instruments you are,  
 and whose work you do, and what  
 kind of Work it is. Tempting others  
 to

to Sin is in Scripture called Murder, Ser. 15.  
 for which Reason, the Devil is said to  
 be a *Murderer from the beginning*, be-  
 cause he was a *Tempter*. *Whosoever com-*  
*mitteth Sin is of the Devil* : but who-  
 ever tempts others to Sin, is a sort of  
 Devil himself.

*Thirdly*, Since God tempts no Man,  
 let us not tempt him. There is fre-  
 quent mention in Scripture of Men's  
 tempting God, *i. e.* trying him as it  
 were, whether he will do any thing for  
 their sakes, that is mis-becoming his  
 Goodness, and Wisdom, and Faithful-  
 ness, or any other of his Perfections.  
 Thus the *Israelites* are said to have  
 tempted God in the *Wilderness* forty  
 years together, and in that space, more  
 remarkably *ten times*. The meaning  
 of which Expressions is, that when God  
 had promised *Abraham* to bring his Seed  
 into the Land of *Canaan*, that People,  
 by their great and repeated provocati-  
 ons of God, did often provoke him to  
 have destroyed them, and consequently  
 to have fail'd of the Promise which he  
 made to the Fathers. The Devil like-  
 wise tempted our Savior to tempt God,

Vol.IV. by casting himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, in confidence that the Angels would take care of him: But our Saviour answers him, *it is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* From which Instance it appears, that Men are said to tempt God, whenever they expect the protection of his Providence in an unwarrantable way. God hath promised to take care of good Men: but if they neglect themselves, or willingly cast themselves into danger, and expect his Providence and Protection, they do not trust God, but tempt him; they try whether God's Providence will countenance their rashness, and provide for them, when they neglect themselves; and protect them from those dangers, to which they wilfully expose themselves.

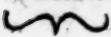
So likewise if we be negligent in our Callings, whereby we should provide for our Families, if we lavish away that which we should lay up for them, and then depend upon the Providence of God to supply them, and take care of them, we tempt God to that which is unworthy of him; which is to give approbation

probation to our folly, and to countenance our sloth and carelessness. We cannot seduce God, and draw him to do any thing that mis-becomes him, but we tempt him, in expecting the Care and Protection of his Providence, when we wilfully run our selves into danger, and neglect the Means of providing for our own safety. And thus I have done with the *first* great Principle contain'd in the Text; *viz. That God is not the Author of the Sins of Men.* I proceed now to the

Ser. 15.

*Second, That every Man is his own greatest Tempter. But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed.* God does not tempt any Man to Sin: but every Man is then tempted, when by his own Lust, his irregular Inclination and Desire, he is seduced to evil, and enticed; *ἐκ δὲ ἑαυτοῦ*, is caught as it were with a Bait, for so the Greek word signifies.

In which words the Apostle gives us a true account of the prevalency and efficacy of temptation upon Men. It is not because God has any design to ensnare Men in Sin; but their own Cor-

Vol. IV.  ruption and vicious inclination seduce them to that which is evil. To instance in the particular temptation the Apostle was speaking of, Persecution and Suffering for the *Cause of Religion*, to avoid which, many did then forsake the Truth, and Apostatiz'd from their Christian Profession. The true Cause of which, was not the Providence of God, which permitted them to be exposed to those Sufferings; but their inordinate love of the good things of this Life, and their unreasonable fears of the Evils and Sufferings of it; they valued the enjoyments of this present Life, more than the favour of God, and that Eternal Happiness which he had promised to them in another Life; and they feared the Persecutions of Men, more than the threatenings of God, and the dreadful punishments of another World. They had an inordinate affection for the ease and pleasure of this Life, and their unwillingness to part with ease, was a great temptation to them to quit their Religion; by this bait they were caught, when it came to the trial.

And thus it is proportionably in all other sorts of temptations. Men are betrayed



trayed by themselves, and the temptation without hath a Party within them, with which it holds a secret correspondence, and which is ready to yield and give consent to it; so that it is our own consent, and treachery to our selves, that makes any temptation Master of us, and without that we are not to be overcome; *Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed.* It is the Lust of Men complying with the temptations which are offer'd to us, which renders them effectual, and gives them the Victory over us.

In the handling of this Argument, I shall from these words of the Apostle observe to you these *two* things.

*First*, That as the Apostle doth here acquit God from any hand in tempting Men to Sin, so he does not ascribe the prevalency of temptation to the Devil.

*Secondly*, That he ascribes the prevalency of temptation to the Lust and vicious inclinations of Men, which seduce them to a compliance with the temptations that are presented to them; *Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside*  
of

Vol. IV. *of his own lust, and enticed.* These two  
 ~~~~~ Observations shall be the subject of my  
 present Discourse.

First, That as the Apostle doth here acquit God from any hand in tempting Men to Sin, so he does not ascribe the prevalency and efficacy of temptation to the Devil. That he acquits God, I have shewn at large in my former Discourse. It is evident likewise, that he does not ascribe the efficacy and prevalency of temptation to the Devil; for the Apostle in this Discourse of his concerning temptations, makes no express mention of the Devil; he supposeth indeed, that Baits are laid for Men, *every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed*, i.e. when he plays with the Baits that are laid for him, and swallows them. And the Scripture elsewhere frequently tells us, that the Devil is very active and busie to tempt Men, and is continually laying Baits before them: but their own Lusts are the Cause why they are caught by them.

And I do the rather insist upon this, because Men are apt to lay great load
 upon

upon the Devil, in the business of temptation, hoping thereby either wholly, or at least in a great measure to excuse themselves; and therefore I shall here consider, how far the Devil by his temptations is the cause of the Sins which Men by compliance with those temptations are drawn into. Ser. 15.

First, It is certain that the Devil is very active and busie to Minister to them the occasions of Sin, and temptations to it. For ever since he fell from God, partly out of enmity to him, and partly out of envy and malice to Mankind, he hath made it his great business and employment to seduce Men to Sin; and to this end he walks up and down the Earth, and watcheth all occasions and opportunities to tempt Men to Sin; and so far as his Power reacheth, and God permits him, he lays baits and temptations before them in all their ways, presenting them with the occasions and opportunities to Sin, and with such baits and allurements as are most suitable to their tempers, and most likely to prevail with their particular inclinations, and as often as he can, surprizing Men with these at the easiest time of access, and with such Circumstances, as
may

Vol.IV. may give his temptations the greatest force and advantage. Of this the Scripture assures us in general, when it tells us of these wiles and devices of Satan, and of the methods of his temptations; so that tho' we do not particularly discern how and when he doth this, yet we have no reason to doubt of the thing, if we believe that there is such a Spirit in the World, as the Scripture particularly tells us there is, that works in the Children of disobedience, and that God, from whom nothing is hidden, and who sees all the secret Engines which are at work in the World, to do us good or harm, hath in mercy to Mankind, given us particular warning of it, that we may not be wholly ignorant of our Enemies, and their malicious Designs upon us, and that we may be continually upon our guard, aware of our danger, and armed against it.

Secondly, The Devil does not only present to Men the temptations and occasions of Sin; but when he is permitted to make nearer approaches to them, does excite and stir them up to comply with these temptations, and to yield to them. And this he does, not only by employing

ing his Instruments to solicit for him, Ser. 15.
and to draw Men to Sin by bad Coun-
fel and Example, which we see frequent-
ly done, and probably very often by the
Devil's instigation; (those who are ve-
ry wicked themselves, and consequent-
ly more enslaved to the Devil, and un-
der his Power, being as it were Factors
for him to seduce others;) but besides
this, 'tis not improbable but the Devil
himself does many times immediately
excite Men to Sin, by working upon
the Humours of their Bodies, or upon
their Imaginations; and by that means
infusing and suggesting evil motions in-
to them; or by diverting them from
those Thoughts and Considerations,
which might check and restrain them
from that wickedness to which he is
tempting them; or by some other
ways and means more secret and un-
known to us. For the Power of Spirits,
whether good or bad, and the manner
of their operation upon our Minds, are
things very secret, and of which we
can give little or no account; but yet
for all that, we have many times rea-
son sufficient to believe a thing to be so,
when we are wholly ignorant of the
manner of it.

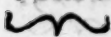
And

Vol.IV. And there is Reason from what is said in Scripture to believe, that the Devil, in some Cases, hath a more immediate power and influence upon the Minds of Men, to excite them to Sin; and, where he discovers a very bad inclination or resolution, to help it forward, and to keep Men to it; as when it is said, *Joh. 13. 27. that the Devil enter'd into Judas*, to push him on in that ill design which he had already engaged in, of betraying our Saviour. And *Act. 5. 3. Satan is said to have filled the heart of Ananias, to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price* for which he had sold his Estate; which expressions do seem to intimate to us some more immediate Power and influence which the Devil had upon those Persons: but then 'tis very observable, that this Power is never ascribed to the Devil, but in the case of great and horrid Sins, and where Men are before-hand notoriously depraved, and either by the actual commission of some former great Sin, or by entertaining some very wicked design, have provoked God to permit the Devil a nearer access to them. For *Judas* had first taken Council how to betray Christ, before it is

is said *the Devil entred into him*, to Ser. 15.
push him on to the execution of it. And

Ananias his Covetousness had first tempted him to keep back part of his Estate, before it is said *the Devil fill'd his heart to lie to the Holy Ghost*; so that what Power the Devil hath over Men, they first give it him; they consent to his outward temptations, before he can get within them. Hence it is that in Scripture great Sinners are described, as being more immediately under the government and influence of the Devil.

Ephes. 2.1, 2. where the Apostle speaking of those, who from Heathenism were Converted to Christianity, *You* (says he) *hath he quickned, who were once dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of disobedience, or unbelief; τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐν ἐμῶν, the Spirit that still acts and inspires the Children of unbelief; that is, those who continue in their infidelity, and would not believe and obey the Gospel. When Men are notoriously wicked, and disobedient to the Counsels of God, the Devil is said to*
act

Vol. IV.  act and inspire them, which certainly signifies some more immediate power and influence which he hath over such Persons.

For as it is very probable, that the Devil is sometimes permitted to come near good Men, so as to tempt them; so by notorious wickedness and impiety, Men do give admission to him, and he is permitted by the just judgment of God, to exercise greater Dominion over them. By resisting his temptations, we drive him from us. So St. James tells us, *Chap. 4. ver. 7. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you:* but as we yield to his temptations, he continually makes nearer approaches to us, and gains a greater power over us.

Thirdly, But for all this, the Devil can force no Man to Sin; his temptations may move and excite Men to Sin, but that they are prevalent and effectual, proceeds from our own will and consent; 'tis our *own Lusts* closing with his Temptations, that produce Sin. The Devil hath more or less power over Men, according as they give way to him; but never so much as to force their Wills, and to compel them to consent to, and comply with his Temptations

tations. The grace of God doth hardly offer this violence to Men for their good, in order to their Salvation; and therefore much less will he permit the Devil to have this power over Men, to their ruine and destruction. God's commanding us to resist the Devil, supposeth that his temptations are not irresistible.

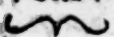
Ser. 15.

Fourthly, From what hath been said, it appears, that tho' the Devil be frequently accessory to the Sins of Men, yet we our selves are the Authors of them; he tempts us many times to Sin, but it is we that commit it. His temptations may sometimes be so violent as to extenuate our fault, but never so forcible as wholly to excuse us; for we are so far guilty of Sin, as we give our consent to it; and how powerful soever the temptation be to any kind of evil, there is always enough of our own will in it to render us guilty.

I am far from thinking that the Devil tempts Men to all the evil that they do. I rather think that the greatest part of the wickedness that is committed in the world, springs from the evil motions of Mens own Minds. Mens own Lusts are generally to them the worst Devil of the two; and do more strongly

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incline

Vol.IV.  incline them to Sin, than any Devil without them can tempt them to it. It is not to be doubted, that the Devil does all the mischief he can to the Souls of Men, so far as God permits him; and tho' the number of Evil Angels be probably very great, yet it is but finite, and every one of them hath a limited power; and tho' they be very active, yet they can be but one where at once; so that his malice at the utmost does only all the evil that it can, not all that it would; he plyes where he has the best Custom, where he has the fairest Opportunity, and the greatest hopes; he leaves Men many times for a season (as it is said) he did our Saviour, because he despaired of success at that time; and it may be sometimes when he is gone, these Persons grow secure, and through their own security and folly fall into those Sins, which the Devil with all his baits and wiles, whilst they were upon their guard, could not tempt them to commit.

Others after he has made them sure, and put them into the way of it, will go on of themselves, and are as mad of Sinning, and as forward to destroy themselves, as the Devil himself could wish;
so

so that he can hardly tempt Men to any wickedness, which he does not find them inclin'd to of themselves. These he can trust with themselves, and leave them to their own inclinations and conduct, finding by experience, that they will do as ill things of their own motion, as if Satan stood continually at their right hand to prompt them, and put them on, so that he can go into a far Country, and employ himself elsewhere, and leave them for a long time, being confident that in his absence they will not bury their Talent, and hide it in a Napkin, but will improve it to a great advantage. And I wish that our own Age did not afford us too many instances of this kind, of such forward and expert sinners as need no Tempter either to instruct or excite them to that which is evil. Now in this Case the Devil betakes himself to other Persons, and removes his Snares and Baits where he thinks there is more need and occasion for them.

So that we may reasonably conclude, that there is a great deal of wickedness committed in the World, which the Devil hath no immediate hand in, tho' he always rejoyceth in it when it is

Vol. IV. done; and that there is a great deal
more reason to attribute all good to the
Motions and Operations of the Spirit of
God, than to ascribe all Sin and wicked-
ness in the World to the Devil; because
the Spirit of God is more powerful, and
is always every where, and is more in-
tent upon his design, and as forward to
promote it, as the Devil can be to carry
on his work; nay, I doubt not but he is
more active to excite Men to good, than
the Devil can be to tempt them to Evil.
And yet for all this, I think there is no
great reason to doubt, but that good
Men do many good actions of their own
inclination, without any special and im-
mediate motion from the Spirit of God.
They are indeed at first regenerate, and
sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and are
continually afterwards under the con-
duct of the same Spirit: but where there
is a new Nature, it is of it self inclina-
ble to that which is good, and will bring
forth fruits, and do actions answerable.
Much less do I think that the Devil
tempts every Man to all the evil that he
does, or the greatest part. When the
Lusts of Men, and the habits of Vice are
grown strong and confirmed, the Devil
may spare his temptations in a great
measure;

measure; for after wicked Men are wound up to such a pitch of impiety, they will go a great while of themselves. Ser. 15.

I have done, with the *first* Observation, that as the Apostle acquits God from having any hand in tempting Men to Sin, so neither does he ascribe the efficacy and prevalency of temptation to the Devil. I proceed to the

Second Observation, That he ascribes the efficacy and success of temptation to the lusts and vicious inclinations of men which seduce them to a consent and compliance with the temptations which are offered to them. *Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own lust and enticed.* We have many powerful Enemies; but we are much more in danger of treachery from within, than of assaults from without. All the power of our Enemies could not destroy us, if we were but true to our selves; so that the Apostle had great reason to ascribe the efficacy of temptation, to the irregular desires and vicious inclinations of Men, rather than to those temptations which the Providence of God permits them to be assaulted with, and consequently to lay the blame of Mens Sins chiefly upon themselves.

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And that chiefly upon these two accounts.

First, Because the Lusts of Men are in a great measure voluntary.

Secondly, God hath put it in our power to resist these temptations, and overcome them. Now so far as the Lusts of Men are voluntary, it is their own fault that they are seduced by them, and if God hath put it in our power to resist and overcome temptations, we may blame our selves, if we be overcome and foiled by them.

First, The Lusts of Men are in a great measure voluntary. By the Lusts of Men, I mean their irregular desires, and vicious inclinations. I grant that the Nature of Man is very much corrupted, and degenerated from its Primitive Integrity and Perfection; but we who are Christians, have received that Grace in Baptism, whereby our Natures are so far healed, as if we be not wanting to our selves, and do not neglect the means which God hath appointed to us, we may mortifie our Lusts, and live a new Life; so that if our Lusts remain unmortified, we our selves are in fault, much more if they gain new strength, and proceed to habits; for this could not be, if we

we did not after we come to Age, and are able to discern between, and to chuse good and evil, voluntarily consent to Iniquity, and by wilful and deliberate Practice of known Sins, improve the evil inclinations of our Nature into vicious habits: but if instead of mortifying and subduing the evil propensions of our Nature (which is no very difficult work to most persons, if they begin it betimes) we will cherish and give new Life and Power to them, we forfeit the Grace which we received in Baptism, and bring our selves again under the Power and Dominion of Sin; and no wonder then, if our Lusts seduce us, and make us ready to comply with the temptations of the World, and the Devil.

Nay, and after this it is still our own fault, if we do not mortifie our Lusts; for if we would hearken to the Counsel of God, and obey his Calls to Repentance, and sincerely beg his Grace and Holy Spirit to this purpose, we might yet recover our selves, and *by the Spirit mortify the Lusts of the Flesh*; for tho' we have left God, he hath not quite forsaken us, but is ready to afford his Grace again to us, tho' we have neglected and abused it, and to give his Holy Spirit to

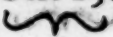
Vol. IV. those that ask him, tho' they have forfeited it; so that tho' our Lusts spring from something which is Natural, yet that they live and have dominion over us, is voluntary, because we might Remedy it if we would, and make use of those Means which God in the Gospel offers to us.

Secondly, God hath put it in our power to resist these temptations, and overcome them; so that it is our own fault, if we yield to them, and be overcome by them.

It is naturally in our power to resist many sorts of temptations; and the grace of God, if we do not neglect it, and be not wanting to our selves, puts it into our power to resist any temptation that may happen to us.

First, It is naturally in our power to resist many sorts of temptations. If we do but make use of our Natural Reason, and those Considerations which are common and obvious to Men, we may easily resist the temptations to a great many Sins. Some Sins are so horrid in their Nature, that when we have the strongest temptations to them, we cannot but have a natural aversion from them; as deliberate Murder, the danger and guilt whereof, are both so great, as make it easy for any

confide-

considerate Man to resist the strongest Ser. 15.
temptation to it, even that of revenge. 

A plain act of injustice, whether by great fraud, or by downright oppression, is so base and disgraceful, so odious and abhorred by humane Nature, that it is not difficult to a Man that hath but a common understanding, and common inclination to be honest, to overcome the greatest temptation of gain and advantage; nay he must offer considerable violence to his Nature and Reason, to bring himself to it at first. Prophaneness and contempt of God and Religion is so monstrous a fault, and of so dreadful an appearance, that every Man that will but use his Reason, can have no temptation to it, either from gratifying his humour, or pleasing his Company, or shewing his wit, that can be of equal force with the Arguments which every Man's Mind and Conscience is apt to suggest to him against it.

Nay, there are many Sins much inferior to these, the temptations whereto may by the ordinary Reasons and Considerations of prudence and interest, be baffled and put out of Countenance. To instance in common Swearing, to which I think there is no temptation, either from
pleasure

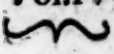
Vol.IV. pleasure or advantage, but only from fashion and custom. Now this temptation is easie to be conquer'd, by considering that every Man that professeth to believe the Bible, must acknowledge it to be a Sin; and if any Man be convinc'd that it is a Sin, I dare undertake to convince him that he can leave it. He that can chuse at any time whether he will Speak or not (which it is certainly in every Man's power to do) can chuse whether he will swear when he speaks. If he says he does it by custom and habit, and when he does not think of it; a very little Care and Resolution will in a short time cure any Man of that Custom; so that it is naturally in every Man's power to break off this Sin.

Secondly, The Grace of God puts it into our power, if we do not neglect it, and be not wanting to our selves, to resist any temptation that may happen to us; and what the Grace of God puts into our power, is as truly in our power, as what we can do our selves. God offers his Grace to every Man under the Gospel, for he has promised to *give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; and it is naturally in every Man's power to ask it, otherwise the Promise signifies nothing; for

for if no Man can ask the Spirit of God, Ser. 15.
'till he first have it, then to promise it
to them that ask it, is to promise it to
them who have it already, and then 'tis
needless to ask it. And if God offer his
Grace to every Man, then 'tis every
Man's fault if he have it not; and every
Man that hath it, may by the ordinary
assistance of that Grace, resist any ordi-
nary temptation. And if at any time
God suffers good Men to be assaulted, he
hath promised in such Cases an Extraor-
dinary Grace and assistance; and that
either *he will not suffer us to be tempted
above what we are able, or, that with the
temptation he will find a way to escape,
that we may be able to bear it.*

And thus I have done with the *Second*
thing I propounded to speak to from
these words, *That every Man is his own
greatest tempter. Every Man is tempted,
when he is drawn aside of his own lust and
enticed.* And now the proper Inferences
from what I have been all this while
Discourſing to you, are these *three.*

First, Not to think to excuse our
selves, by laying the blame of our Sins
upon the temptation of the Devil. That
the Devil tempts us is not our fault, be-
cause we cannot help it; but it is our
voluntary

Vol.IV.  voluntary compliance with his temptations, our consenting to that evil which he solicits us to, which makes us guilty; *Every Man is tempted, when he is drawn aside of his own Lust;* the Lusts of our own hearts give the efficacy to the temptations of the Devil. Men many times Sin upon the motions and suggestions of the Devil: but tho' he be guilty of tempting us, we are guilty of consenting to his temptations.

Many times we are not sure that the Devil tempts us to such a Sin; but we are sure that we commit it, and consequently that we are guilty of it. Nay it is certain, if there were no Devil, many would be wicked, and perhaps not much less wicked than they are. The Lusts and vicious inclinations of Men would yield to the temptations of the World, tho' there were none to manage them, and to set them on to the greatest advantage; so that we cannot excuse our faults upon this account, that we are tempted by the Devil. If this were a sufficient excuse for us, the Devil would take no pleasure in tempting us; the whole design of his temptation being to make us guilty, and by the guilt of Sin to make us miserable.

Secondly,

Secondly, From hence we learn what reason we have to pray to God, that he would *not lead us into temptation, i. e.* not permit us to fall into it; for in the Phrase of Scripture, God is many times said to do those things, which his Providence permits to be done. The best of us have some remainders of Lust, some irregular desires and appetites, which will be apt to betray us to Sin, when powerful temptations are presented to us; so that it is a great happiness to the best of Men, to be kept by the Providence of God out of the way of violent temptations; for our own strength to resist them is but small, and we are apt to be secure, and to neglect our guard; we are easie to be surprized, and in continual danger through our own weakness or carelesness. Our greatest security is, if we be sincere, and heartily desirous to do well, and firmly resolved against Sin, and do depend upon God for his Grace and Assistance, that his Providence will not suffer us to fall into the hands of dangerous and violent temptations, which probably would be too hard for us; he who knows what our strength is, *will not suffer us to be tempted, above what we are able.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, From hence we may learn the best way to disarm Temptations, and to take away the power of them, and that is by mortifying our Lusts, and subduing our vicious Inclinations. When this is done, (which by the Grace of God may be done) Temptation hath lost its greatest advantage upon us. 'Tis the Conspiracy of our Lusts, with the Temptations that set upon us, that betrays us into their power. The true Reason why Men fall into Sin, is not because they are tempted, but because there is something within them, which inclines and disposes them to comply with the Temptation, and to yield to it. It is said, when the Devil came to our Saviour to Tempt him, that *he found nothing in him*, and therefore his Temptations had no force upon him. The more we mortifie our Lusts, the less the Devil will find in us, for his Temptations to work upon. Every spark is dangerous, when it falls upon Combustible Matter; but tho' sparks fly never so thick, there is no danger, so long as there is nothing about us to catch fire.

If

If we will not be drawn aside and enticed to Sin, let us mortifie our Lusts; for so far as we are mortified, we are out of the power of Temptation.

Men are apt to complain of Temptations, that they are too hard for them, and that they are not able to resist them, tho' they pray to God continually for his Grace to that purpose. This indeed is one means very proper and necessary to be used; but this is not all that we are to do; we must break off habits of Sin, and subdue our Lusts, and keep under our Inclinations, and then we shall find our selves able to resist and encounter Temptations with more success. And 'till we do this, in vain do we pray for God's Grace, and depend upon him for strength to overcome the Temptations that do assault us; for God's Grace was never design'd to countenance the sloath and negligence of Men, but to encourage and second our Resolutions and Endeavours of well-doing. If we expect
God's

Vol. IV. God's Grace and Assistance upon other
 Terms, we tempt God, and provoke
 him to leave us to the power of Temp-
 tations, to be *drawn away and enticed*
by our own Lusts.

FINIS.

